

# Role of NAAC accreditation in Achieving SDG 4 (Quality Education) in India: A Review

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**Abstract:** Providing relevant education and enhancing its quality for the students has been one of the priorities across the world. It is a matter of concern not only nationally but internationally as well. United Nations recognized the 'Quality Education' as the fourth Global Goal or SDG 4 amongst the 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by the target year 2030. To achieve quality in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), accreditation can play a crucial role. Accreditation ensures the educational process and systems perform as per the set standards to provide quality education in each institution. From the Indian perspective, the country consists of one of the largest higher education systems in the world with the highest number of students. In order to ensure quality in the HEIs India established its own accreditation agency known as 'National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)'. It is an autonomous organization established by the Central Government under the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1994. NAAC consists of seven criteria that works as a basis of its HEI assessment. The criteria include curriculum, teaching and evaluation, infrastructure and resources, research and innovations, student support, administration and governance, values and ethics of the institutions. The study is an attempt to explore the functioning of NAAC and understand its role to achieve SDG 4 in India.

**Keywords:** Accreditation, Higher Educational Institutions, HEIs, NAAC, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Quality Education, SDG 4, Sustainable Development Goal

## INTRODUCTION

*"Plants are shaped by cultivation and men by education. We are born weak, we need strength; we are born totally unprovided, we need aid; we are born stupid, we need judgment. Everything we do not have at our birth and which we need when we are grown is given us by education."*

- Jean Jacques Rousseau, Genevan philosopher

The quote shows the importance of education for the development of human being. Every individual must get an opportunity of education beginning from primary to higher education since childhood. Primary education nurtures the mind and basic personality of a student at the tender age. While secondary education helps the person to explore and grow in the area of interest to achieve success with the right ethics. Similarly, higher education lead to acquire relevant knowledge and skills for personal and professional growth with critical thinking and intellectual maturity. Hence, taking the importance of overall education into account, not only national but international agencies such as the United Nations (UN) lays emphasis on it. UN focused on *Quality Education* for all across the globe by making it as a set goal in different time periods. Firstly, it was recognized as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by UN across the world. Amongst the eight goals, the MDG 2 was stated as to '*achieve universal primary education*'.

MDGs proved a success and created significant impact in the world by 2015. Hence, MDGs were then upgraded to the 17 Global Goals or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs are the goals that aim to bring Sustainable Development in the world by the target year 2030. Brundtland Report explained the term 'Sustainable Development' as "*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" Each SDG consists of specified targets and indicators that measure the achievement of the respective goal. It also acts as a guide or roadmap for the concerned authorities and institutions to achieve the goals in an effective manner. The 17 SDGs include 169 targets

and 247 indicators in all for the world to achieve by the year 2030 (ICLEI, 2015). Within the 17 SDGs, *Quality Education* has been recognized as *fourth Sustainable Development Goal or SDG 4*. It consists

of 10 targets and 11 indicators in all. These targets and indicators include the fundamental concepts without which attainment of quality education will be incomplete as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: SDG 4 Targets and Indicators

Target 4.1	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
4.1.2	Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)
Target 4.2	By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
4.2.1	Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial well-being, by sex
4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex
Target 4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university
4.3.1	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
Target 4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship
4.4.1	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
Target 4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile, and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples, and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
Target 4.6	By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
4.6.1	Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex
Target 4.7	By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture’s contribution to sustainable development
4.7.1	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment
Target 4.a	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
4.a.1	Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service
Target 4.b	By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
4.b.1	Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study
Target 4.c	By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States
4.c.1	Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level

Hence, realizing the vital role of quality education for the society and world, India established its own quality check agency for the higher education known as National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). NAAC is an autonomous institution established by the Government of India for the

regularization of higher education in India. Formed in September 1994, NAAC is responsible to check the ongoing education processes and systems in the higher educational institutions of India. It analyzes and qualifies the institutions on the specified benchmarks or standards if they are eligible to serve higher

education to the students or not. NAAC working is based on five core values such as *contributing to national development, fostering global competencies among students, inculcating value system among students, promoting the use of technology, and quest for excellence* (National Assessment and Accreditation Council, 2020).

#### *History of NAAC:*

NAAC first emerged as an idea under the National Education Policy (NEP) of India, 1986. The policy suggested the accreditation unit to keep the standard of higher education in institutions of the country. Based on it, the University Grants Commission (UGC) set up an independent institution using section 12 CCC of the UGC Act (Act 3 of 1956). The institution is called the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). NAAC was established on September 16, 1994 with its official office in Bangalore. NAAC evaluates and accredits colleges and universities to help and upgrade the working as per the set level of higher education. It provides the guidelines to the higher educational institutions to strengthen it and make the most of available resources, opportunities, and skills. NAAC provides rankings to educational institutions based on its micro and macro infrastructures, educational facilities, tools used to teach, and quality of teachers (National Assessment and Accreditation Council, 2020).

#### *Vision and Mission of NAAC:*

Statistically, India has one of the biggest networks of colleges and universities in the world. According to the ibef Education Industry Report 2022, about 27% of the people in India are under 14 years old. It shows that the education business has a lot of room to grow. There are 42,343 colleges in India in the year 2020 with 1,072 universities by November 2022. With this, India records 38.5 million college students in 2019-2020 with 19.6 million men and 18.9 million women. In the year 2020, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education was 27.1% with approximate business of 117 billion US dollars. And with this, higher education of India is considered as one of the largest public funded education systems in the world.

From the future perspectives, the education business in India is expected to increase by around 225 billion US dollars. Besides it, the Indian ed-tech industry is

expected to be worth 30 billion US dollars by the year 2031 that will be up by 700–800 million US dollars by the year 2021. These stats are clear indication that colleges and universities are increasing in the country exponentially. However, the quality of education is still a matter of concern from various aspects. Hence, the role of NAAC in scanning the systems and quality of education in every institution became more critical and important. NAAC evaluation and certification is considered to be Quality Status of the institution in India. Hence, it is very important for the accreditation unit of such a large economy to get clear with its vision and mission. NAAC presents its vision and mission in the following way:

#### a) Vision

*“To make quality the most important part of higher education in India through a mix of self and external quality review, growth, and maintenance efforts.”*

#### b) 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 in 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, and*
- *To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion, and sustenance.*

NAAC run by its General Council (GC) and Executive Committee (EC). These managing bodies include higher education managers, policymakers, and top academics from different parts of the education system. The President of the General Council of NAAC becomes the Chairperson of the UGC. The Director of the Executive Committee (EC) appointed as the Executive Officer of NAAC. The Director looks out for academics and business of NAAC and is a member-secretary of both the GC and EC. NAAC consists statutory bodies to perform its basic functions

and policies with some advisory and consulting bodies. Such bodies are constructed from time to time based on the situations (National Assessment and Accreditation Council, 2020).

*NAAC Accreditation Process*

As per the accreditation process, any higher education institution is eligible to apply for NAAC accreditation and assessment that fulfills either of the following: two consecutive batches of students have graduated or which have been in existence for the last six years, whichever comes first. The NAAC does not approve offshore places or institutions outside of India until now. For NAAC accreditation, educational institutions have to first post the required information on the All India Higher Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) site. They are then given a reference number that is important for Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) approval process. The NAAC evaluates the quality of higher education institutions using an internationally recognized methodology with its goal and purpose statements.

The certification process of NAAC got updated from offline to online medium (NAAC, 2024). Changes and upgradation in the inspection criteria occurs with time and changing demands from the education system. Regular improvements are crucial for ensuring quality education and innovation in every educational institution. NAAC evaluates and grades universities using a three-step method. There are seven criteria to evaluate the quality of higher education institutions. Each criteria consists of different weightages under various key indicators depending on functional and organizational functions. Important committees under NAAC are as follows: 1. General Council 2. Executive Committee 3. Finance Committee 4. Building Committee 5. Appeals Committee 6. Purchase Committee 7. CRIEQA Committee (Committee on Reforms in the Evaluation and Quality Assurance).

Grading by the NAAC for Institutions effective from July 2017

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	Letter Grade
3.51 - 4.00	A++
3.26 - 3.50	A+
3.01 - 3.25	A
2.76 - 3.00	B++
2.51 - 2.75	B+
2.01 - 2.50	B

With the above context, it can be said that NAAC accreditation can directly contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The organization focuses on the regularization, improvements, and upgradations of the educational institutions and its services towards students and other stakeholders. It is responsible for ensuring quality higher education in India that can directly help in achieving SDG 4 and its set targets. By evaluating and accrediting higher education institutions (HEIs) based on its education standards, NAAC promotes inclusive and equitable education. It is responsible to ensure enhanced teaching and learning quality with effective learning environments that is mentioned in various SDG 4 targets specified by the United Nations. Besides it, NAAC also focuses on infrastructure, teacher qualifications, and continuous improvement of the resources and services. It helps in achieving the quality and relevant skills delivery to the students that ensures higher education access, gender equality, and lifelong learning. By addressing political, economic, and social challenges and updating accreditation criteria to meet the evolving educational demands, NAAC supports the goal of providing inclusive and equitable quality education, essential for sustainable development by 2030.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Exploring different methods in teaching and training make the learning process more effective and efficient. It can help in improving the quality of learning and serving relevant skills at different levels of education. And to ensure it happens in every institution, assessment plays a very crucial role. However, a frequent and automatic assessment can help the educational institutions to regularly upgrade and improve the resources and other services as per the norms (Doley, 2014). SDG 4 targets 4.a and 4.c also specifies the need for regularly upgrading the facilities, infrastructure, resources, and qualified teachers in the education system globally. Such regular checks on HEIs regarding every aspect is called accreditation. Accreditation is an important check process that is considered vital to recognize the quality of any higher education institution.

There are several accreditation bodies present in India for HEIs. NAAC and National Board of Accreditation

(NBA) are two of them. The study by Gholap and Kushare (2019) compared the accreditation systems of NAAC and NBA in India and highlighted their roles in quality assurance and improvement in higher education. It was found that NAAC employs a broader institutional approach using a seven-criteria GPA system while NBA focuses on program-specific accreditation with a ten-criteria points-based system. Both require at least two batches of graduates for eligibility and aim to foster continuous improvement. For NAAC accreditation, HEIs must formulate an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) division in their institution whereas NBA made it optional. NAAC provides overall grades from A++ to D that are valid for 5-7 years while NBA accredits for 5 years (above 750 points) or 2 years (600-750 points). Overall, it can be said that both systems drive institutions to adopt innovative pedagogical methods enhancing educational experiences and maintaining high standards in Indian higher education.

One of the vital pillar of education system are the teachers. Teachers work at the base level and train students in the needed skills and values. Hence, teacher training must be the prior focus for any educational institutions for delivering quality education as also specified in SDG 4.c. For effective teacher training, Ahamad Wasim Musthaq I. A. and Jegadeeshwaram M. (2023) studied the top five universities ranked by NAAC and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Analyzing responses of 250 teachers, the study explored the impact of Knowledge Management (KM) practices on the job performance of faculty in selected higher educational institutions. It was observed that KM practices such as Knowledge Creation, Acquisition, Transfer, Utilization, Retention, Accumulation, Internalization, and Sharing were practiced essentially in the institutions. However, differences in the perception of KM practices and the level of execution can exist on the basis of certain factors amongst the teachers such as faculty age. Also, effective KM practices enhanced the job performances of the faculties particularly job commitment, attachment, and involvement. Hence, the study can be taken as an example to understand the vitality of KM practices to increase the teaching efficiency of the faculties for quality education.

With the right teaching practices, it is equally important to maintain a hygienic and sustainable environment of study for the students. Educational institutions must put in certain eco-friendly projects and other practical systems such as recycling organic waste, vermicompost, biogas plants, converting waste into energy, and rainwater harvesting. It can foster the practical understanding in the students about the sustainability within the college campus (Kumbhar and Toradmal, 2022). Also, colleges must incorporate environmental studies into the curriculum. It will educate students on the economic, political, and scientific aspects of environmental issues and promote environmentally conscious behavior. Additionally, activities such as 'No Vehicle Days' and forming Nature and Adventure Clubs encourage engagement and appreciation of students for the natural environment.

Kumbhar and Toradmal (2022) also stressed on the importance of organizing environment-related events including webinars, seminars, and conferences to increase awareness and active participation in sustainability efforts. Besides it, colleges and institutions can focus on collaborations with environmental organizations to facilitate educational and research work for the students. Such efforts not only will help the students in getting quality education but can help the educational institutions in multiple resource management including water, waste, energy and other facilities within the campus. Furthermore, it also aligns well with SDG 4 and the guidelines of the NAAC. Executing such pursuits can help the education system in multiple ways including quality education delivery and managing the institutions own resources. However, it requires thorough, strict, and automated system for its execution in the large number of institutions present in the country (Chaudhari and Sharma, 2014).

The NAAC uses following seven factors to evaluate higher education institutions (HEIs) (NAAC, 2019): *1. Curricular Aspects 2. Teaching-Learning, and Assessment 3. Research, Innovations and Extensions 4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources 5. Student Support and Progression 6. Governance, Leadership and Management 7. Institutional Values and Best Practices.* Aithal, Shailashree, and Kumar (2016) examined the NAAC accreditation system using the ABCD analysis (Advantages, Benefits, Constraints

and Disadvantages) framework. It is to identify and analyze various factors that impact the system including their critical elements. Results reveal that the advantages and benefits supporting the NAAC accreditation outweigh its constraints and disadvantages. It indicates the potential popularity for the NAAC accreditation system in enhancing administrative and academic progress within institutions. The NAAC system supports student development through personalized interventions, fostering partnerships with parents, industries, and the community. The study emphasizes the significance of addressing key issues to ensure quality, with critical constituent elements playing a vital role in success.

Besides it, NAAC itself conducted an impact analysis on the first 100 accredited educational institutions (Shyamasundar, 2007). The author analyzed the NAAC initiative to perform Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) regarding the educational facilities in the institutions. The analysis revealed that significant improvements were made in student support services after evaluating students feedback. The major improvements done includes need-based and skill-oriented programs to meet student demands. Autonomous institutions took the opportunity to innovate its curriculum and focusing on previously overlooked areas such as library access, technology integration, placement services, and counseling. Non-science students also expressed a need for computer orientation leading to improved technological resources and faculty training.

With the span of time in the parallel stream, Patil and Kulkarni (2023) also studied the effectiveness of NAAC Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) for assessing and improving academic practices in higher education institutes. The study verified the efficiency of NAAC SSS process in the current era through statistical analysis over a four-year time span. It was observed that regular feedback and its implementation is still a helpful tool to improve academic engagement and satisfaction. It demonstrated that systematic analysis and follow-up actions based on the feedback from SSS can significantly enhance the student satisfaction index at both the institute and department levels. However, an active responsive initiatives and actions are crucial for the effective improvements by the institutions.

India is a major player in higher education around the world. But the problem of internationalizing higher education is still a challenge for the country in many aspects. Internationalization of higher education grew around the world because countries' populations are changing. Countries with relatively small populations attract more foreign students. Educational institutions are growing and collaborating with other education providers and organizations in other countries (Patil and Pillai, 2015). From the Indian perspective, in order to deliver quality education to the large population of India it is important first to ensure that equal level of quality education must be delivered across every institutions of India. It can help significantly in ensuring that quality education is accessible to everyone no matter the geography of the person. It can significantly help families providing quality education economically without letting the children go out home town for the quality studies. The need for the quality enhancement in the Indian education system can be understood from the fact that even being one of the highest HEI systems in the world, no Indian institution stood amongst the top 100 global universities (QS World University Ranking, 2023).

Conforming to the idea, Ravikumar et al. (2021) assessed the performance of several Indian HEIs region-wise as per their NAAC accreditation scores. The Southern region emerged as the dominant performer with an average CGPA of 3.07 followed closely by the North Eastern region at 3.04. The Eastern region lagged with the lowest average CGPA of 2.69. The analysis highlighted that the HEI highest scores were generally achieved in the criteria of Curricular Aspects and Infrastructure and Learning Resources. While Research, Consultancy, and Extensions had notably lower scores with an average CGPA of 2.65. It indicated that there is a need for enhanced focus on research quality. Moreover, state universities performed significantly low with none reaching a CGPA of 3.0. The national average CGPA stood at 2.85 highlighting significant quality discrepancies among universities across the country. Overall, the study presented an example of significantly unequal quality in education across India. There is a crucial need for post-accreditation strategies to sustain and enhance quality in higher education institutions.

To understand and verify the process and impact of NAAC accreditation in the educational institutions, Petare (2016) performed a study in Sanjay Ghodawat Institute, Kolhapur. It was found that students under NAAC approved institutions are trained and encouraged to participate in multiple events. It includes paper presentations, seminars, and preparing project proposals extended with their learning. Students were directed towards creating technical articles to develop written skills and conduct seminars. Guest lectures and conferences are organized in the institution for students to seek knowledge from the experts of different fields. Students were encouraged towards research in their relevant fields so that they can explore the resources like journals and reference books for seeking additional information. Attention has been given to individual students through mentors both in academics and extracurricular activities.

Extending the parallel study in multiple institutions, Semwal and Prasad (2017) investigated the impact of NAAC accreditation in different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. The study tried understanding the benefits of NAAC accreditation for Indian HEIs and if the claimed benefits by NAAC are realized by the institutions. It used forty statements reflecting the nine benefits claimed by NAAC in 304 NAAC-accredited and 18 non-NAAC-accredited HEIs. The nine benefits claimed by the NAAC are: *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 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.*

It was observed from the Semwal and Prasad (2017) study that HEIs contains similar kinds of expectations from the NAAC accreditation process. However, the realization of benefits varies. The major difference observed were first in benefit number 4 that is facilitating funding agencies with performance data

and benefit number 8 that is providing reliable information on educational quality to employers. NAAC can focus if all the educational institutions are getting equal benefits of all the factors. It can prove significantly helpful to increase the trust on the accreditation process in India.

A parallel study has been done by Jisha (2015). The author presented a survey conducted on NAAC-accredited Arts and Science colleges affiliated with Kannur University. It was focused on the NAAC role in ensuring quality assurance in higher education. The study finds that the academic environments and campuses of the colleges have significantly improved since receiving accreditation. Quality has become a crucial concept in education, emphasizing its social transformative and individual developmental aspects. While concerns exist about the negative impact of adopting managerial and market-based quality approaches in education, the study notes that measures for ensuring quality are dynamic and must continually evolve to align with changing educational goals. The steps taken by these colleges are viewed as essential but minimum requirements for ongoing progress in the pursuit of quality higher education.

However, one of the gaps that can be observed in the NAAC accreditation at some level is the unequal contribution or participation of stakeholders in the process. Chaudhari and Sharma (2014) collected the data on the awareness of NAAC from the teachers, principals, and other governing bodies of some of the Indian colleges. The authors found that around 75 percent of individuals have an awareness of the NAAC concept while 25 percent are not aware about it. Amongst the aware teachers active participation in the NAAC process is less. The involvement of the teachers in decision-making remains limited resulting in under-utilization of creative ideas. Besides it, the NAAC process is acknowledged as challenging but it has resulted in an enhancement of education quality. Successful NAAC rankings are attributed to the consistent application of management concepts and principles such as teamwork, follow-up, time management, and transparency at every stage.

NAAC accreditation plays an important role in ensuring quality within higher educational institutions (Zarco, 2022). But some institutions are observed to

practice certain activities to enhance quality education for the sake of NAAC accreditation rather than maintaining it for the students' improvement. Institutions with NAAC accreditation should focus not only on achieving higher grades but also on providing genuine quality education. Such approach contributes to develop skilled and motivated young workforce for nation-building. The establishment of an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) within institutions must be essential for enhancing and safeguarding education quality in India. Institutions responsible for quality education including NAAC, AICTE, UGC, and governmental bodies must enforce rigorous quality standards to exert pressure on institutions in various dimensions.

Overall with the literature, the importance of diverse teaching methods, regular assessments, and accreditation in enhancing educational quality in higher educational institutions (HEIs) can be understood. And for it, accreditation bodies such as NAAC and NBA must maintain high standards through structured evaluations. Besides it, promoting campus sustainability and using feedback mechanisms can improve academic and environmental outcomes. Also, it is the time wherein one of the largest higher education system needs to be internationalized without any regional disparities and biasness. There is a vital need for consistent post-accreditation strategies and stakeholder engagement. Overall, stringent quality standards and continuous improvement are key to achieving excellence in higher education.

## DISCUSSION

Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to build a strong network of quality education across the world for each person. But it could not be done by one or few entities, rather group of institutions needs to do the collective efforts to enhance the quality of education at the respective countries and areas. NAAC is one of such kind of organization that consists the potential to empower and control the quality of the education system in the higher educational institutions of India. The literature derives the significance of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in improving the quality of higher education in India. Several research studies and findings have been presented to emphasize the positive impact of NAAC

accreditation on various aspects of higher education institutions (HEIs). The study tried presenting different literature that can highlight various aspects of the Indian Accreditation organization that is NAAC. Some of the key components that has been discussed are:

- *Quality Enhancement through Innovation and Management*

NAAC focuses on experimenting with creative teaching and administrative methods to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of education. Systematic assessment planning to elevate the quality and standards of higher education has been emphasized in its criteria. The incorporation of NAACs guidelines and concepts aids educational institutions in achieving the goal of improving the education system. A crucial factor that can help in accreditation process is the automation of higher education institutions to ensure continuous maintenance and improvement.

- *Components and Impact of NAAC Accreditation*

The NAAC evaluation framework, encompassing factors such as curriculum, teaching methods, research, infrastructure, student support, leadership, and innovation, is discussed as a tool to assess and enhance educational institutions. Aithal, Shailashree, and Kumar (2016) have developed the ABCD analysis to identify the advantages, benefits, constraints, and disadvantages of the NAAC accreditation system. The findings highlight the system positive aspects outweighing its drawbacks, indicating its potential for enhancing administrative and academic progress within institutions.

- *Student-Centered Approach and Internationalization*

The literature throws the light on the way NAAC acknowledges the shift in higher education institutions towards student-centered approaches encouraging active participation, paper presentations, seminars, and individual mentoring. Some authors suggested upgradation and improve to aim for internationalization of higher education. However, the accreditation process requires more thorough and precise ways to become efficient and effective for internationalization. The literature also pointed out the increasing trend of internationalization worldwide due



to changing demographics, increased interest in accepting foreign students, and cross-border partnerships in education. Hence, improvements in certain aspects of NAAC accreditation can help education institutions of India to move up towards internationalization.

- *Quality Assurance and Role of NAAC*

The study underscored the role of NAAC in ensuring quality assurance in higher education. It is highlighted that NAAC accreditation is not just about achieving higher grades but also about providing genuine quality education. The establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) is deemed essential for maintaining and enhancing education quality. Various management principles, teamwork, and transparency play a vital role in successful NAAC accreditation.

*The Benefits of NAAC Assessment and Accreditation*

- Improvements in Institutions Education Quality:
  1. A thorough assessment process helps the institution recognize its strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
  2. Proper evaluation makes internal planning and resource allocation more effective.
  3. Understanding past shortcomings enhances the campus environment and cooperation.
  4. Funding agencies seek objective data for performance-based financing.
  5. Institutions can adopt new and advanced teaching methods.
  6. Institutions get a renewed identity and direction with accreditation.
  7. Promotes both inter-institutional and intra-institutional relationships.
  8. Provides a systematic foundation for making informed decisions to improve institutional operations.
  9. Establishes a rigorous academic atmosphere within the institution.
  10. Promotes the internalization of a quality culture, including structured documentation methodologies.
- Student Advantages:
  1. Students receive a balanced education of high academic quality and professional relevance, integrated into the institution's programs, activities, and processes.

2. Quality education enhances the employability of graduates.
3. Financial aid and traditional funding sources are available only to students enrolled in NAAC-accredited institutions.
4. A strong academic environment helps students gain knowledge in various subjects to achieve their life goals.
5. *Placements:* Accreditation increases the number and variety of job opportunities available to students, as many companies prefer to recruit from highly-rated institutions.
6. *Additional Research:* For further research, higher education institutions often consider students' college grades to better understand their performance compared to peers, with higher accreditation improving the chances of a favorable response.

- Benefits for Employers:

1. NAAC accreditation assures employers that students have received a diverse education nurturing students towards versatility.
2. It ensures employers that students got relevant skills from a well-structured and systematic education.
3. Employers gain valuable insights into the quality of education of potential hires.

- Enhancing Faculty Development:

1. Faculties get the opportunities of induction and orientation programs.
2. Gets incentives for effective research and projects.
3. NAAC accredited institutions support paper presentations and publishing research.
4. Encouragement for active participation in academic and research activities.
5. NAAC accreditation ensures regular training and qualification of professionals.

- Advantages for Parents and Stakeholders:

1. NAAC accredited institution ensures a commitment to quality education.
2. Parents and stakeholders get reliable information about programs and courses of the educational institutions.
3. Quality education in accredited institutions benefit industries and other organizations with better human potential for business.

4. Parents are assured that the children will experience a nurturing learning environment for a bright future.

- **NAAC Contribution to National Progress:**

The fundamental purpose of higher education includes teaching, training, research, and community service. India consists one of the largest higher education system in the world. But for the global success and recognition especially in the fields demanding highly skilled experts, the significance of higher education quality amplifies. And for it, a set globally recognized standards needed to be formed and followed by each educational institutions. It is important so that students can gain quality education in any institution accessible to them in the field of their interests. NAAC is equipped to accommodate numerous institutions to instill a proactive culture of quality enhancement. And to gain the NAAC accreditation and execute it effectively, many states have established State Quality Assurance Cells to advocate for assessment.

NAAC has also released nine comprehensive statewide Accreditation Analysis reports, influencing state governments, universities, and policymakers. Beyond its accreditation role, NAAC has broadened its scope by strengthening its advisory function. The compelling evidence highlights that higher education contributes significantly to the growth of quality education in each Indian HEI. It directly correlates with the development level of India and its well-educated human resource pool. NAAC accreditation serves to instill stakeholder confidence, affirming that the nation technical workforce meets international standards. Such substantial contribution surely facilitates social and economic advancement by producing top-tier professionals in every field.

### CONCLUSION

The literature presented the impact of NAAC accreditation in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). It highlighted the integral role of accreditation in enhancing the quality of higher education in India. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been pivotal in promoting continuous improvement practices and establishing benchmark standards that align with global educational objectives. Through assessment

and accreditation processes, NAAC ensures that educational institutions in India adhere to high standards of quality education, which is essential for fostering sustainable development and achieving SDG 4 by 2030.

The literature signifies the importance of regular assessments and the role of accreditation bodies like NAAC and NBA in maintaining educational standards. Studies have shown that NAAC comprehensive evaluation criteria that include curricular aspects, teaching-learning processes, research innovations, infrastructure, student support, governance, and institutional values significantly contribute to the overall improvement of higher educational institutions. The impact analysis and student satisfaction surveys conducted by NAAC reveal that accredited institutions have made substantial advancements in educational facilities, curriculum innovation, and student support services, thereby enhancing the learning environment and ensuring the delivery of quality education.

Moreover, the emphasis on teacher training, eco-friendly practices, and international collaborations further highlights the holistic approach adopted by NAAC to improve the quality of education. Effective knowledge management practices and sustainable initiatives within educational institutions are crucial for achieving the targets set under SDG 4. The concerted efforts of NAAC in addressing various aspects of quality education demonstrate its commitment to providing inclusive and equitable education, fostering global competencies, and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all students. Thus, NAAC accreditation not only elevates the standards of higher education in India but also aligns with the broader goal of achieving sustainable development through quality education.

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