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The Role of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council in Ensuring Quality Education in the Indian Education System: An Analysis of Its Accreditation Standards and Grading Practices

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ABSTRACT: *The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) strives to uphold the quality of education by conducting transparent assessments and certifying Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Through the Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) process, educational institutions are rigorously evaluated to ensure their adherence to guidelines and requirements established by esteemed national bodies, like NAAC. These accreditation standards evolve to meet the diverse needs and capabilities of various stakeholders. This study delves into the functioning of NAAC and its pivotal role in the comprehensive evaluation of HEIs in India, fostering a robust educational landscape across the nation. Furthermore, it explores the evolution of the NAAC Grading System from 1995 to 2023 and analyzes the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the Self Study Report (SSR) as integral components of the A&A process for HEIs in India.*

KEYWORDS*:* National Assessment and Accreditation Council, assessment and accreditation, self-study report, Higher Education Institution and Quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Journey of NAAC in India

Table 1. Total Number of Accreditations (Status as of 21/08/2023)

NAAC Accreditations (Status as on 21/08/2023)						
	Cycle-1	Cycle-2	Cycle-3	Cycle-4	Cycle-5	Number of Accreditations
Universities	441	250	122	40	--	853
Colleges	9413	4330	1794	350	03	15890
Total	9854	4580	1916	390	03	16743

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) stands as the foremost regulatory authority for upholding the standards of quality in higher education across India. Established in 1994 by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi, its primary mission is to evaluate and accredit Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) while simultaneously preserving and elevating the quality of higher education. The NAAC's central headquarters are in Bangalore, and it actively contributes to the task of maintaining and assessing performance in colleges and universities throughout the country. To ensure and enhance the quality of HEIs, the NAAC employs a blend of internal and external methods. This comprehensive approach is designed to monitor, assess, and improve the quality of education in these institutions. The aim is to assist HEIs in raising their standards of instruction, thereby fostering a robust educational foundation. This is achieved through a systematic process of assessment, both by peers and self-assessment, guided by predefined criteria that measure an institution's overall performance and that of its individual units. NAAC accreditation is awarded for a period of five years and serves as a testament to the quality status of the institution. While adhering to global standards of assessment, NAAC also incorporates necessary modifications to align with the unique Indian context. Over the years, NAAC has played a pivotal role in the global quality assurance movement, having been a founding member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Furthermore, NAAC actively collaborates with quality assurance agencies from various countries, such as Australasian Quaternary Association (AUQA), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), and National Qualifications Framework (NQA)[1] These collaborations have significantly contributed to helping institutions in the Asia Pacific region establish effective quality assurance systems. Crucially, NAAC's guiding principle is not to penalize or criticize educational institutions, but rather to support and improve them. The driving ethos of NAAC is to facilitate and ameliorate, empowering all stakeholders in institutions of higher learning to optimize their resources, skills, and abilities. As of August 21, 2023, NAAC has awarded accreditation to a staggering total

of 16,743 HEIs across the nation. This figure comprises 441 universities and 9,413 colleges in the first cycle, 250 universities and 4,330 colleges in the second cycle, 122 universities and 1,794 colleges in the third cycle, 40 universities and 350 colleges in the fourth cycle, and no universities and just three colleges in the fifth cycle. This extensive reach underscores NAAC's crucial role in the enhancement of the quality of higher education in India.

In the pursuit of understanding the dynamic evolution of the NAAC and its profound impact on India's higher education landscape, our study sets forth a clear set of objectives. These objectives encompass: i) Tracing the historical journey of NAAC, from its inception to its pivotal role in shaping the quality standards of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country, ii) Analyzing the strategies, challenges, and milestones experienced by NAAC during different phases of its accreditation process, iii) Investigating the transformative shifts in NAAC's accreditation methodology, which have not only adapted to the ever-changing educational landscape but also enhanced its effectiveness, iv) Recognizing the influence of NAAC accreditation on the elevation of educational standards, fostering a culture of excellence in HEIs, v) Reflecting upon the ongoing role of NAAC in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education institutions, as of the present day.

In the sections that follow, we delve into the various phases of NAAC's journey and explore the multifaceted aspects of its accreditation process. Here is an overview of what each section holds: Section 2: Explores NAAC's formative years (1994-1999), emphasizing quality assurance and its challenges. Section 3: Investigates the phase from 1999 to 2002, recognizing growing recognition and state engagement. Section 4: Focuses on the 2002-2007 phase, marked by increased accreditations and internal quality emphasis. Section 5: Highlights shifts in methodology from 2007 to 2017, including the evolving grading system and RUSA integration. Section 6: Discusses the revised accreditation framework (2017-present), adapting to global challenges. Section 7: Examines the Revised Accreditation Framework (RAF) with a focus on ICT and quantitative data. Section 8: Unveils the assessment process, including Self-Study Reports, Student Satisfaction Surveys, and criteria for evaluation. Section 9: Concludes the assessment process.

Phase I- From The Year 1994-1999

In its early years, NAAC focused on spreading quality assurance across the country. Many colleges and universities organized awareness events, involving various stakeholders like State Directorates of Higher Education, Development Boards, Councils, and Teaching Staff Colleges. NAAC encountered challenges and academic resistance but took measures to foster a culture of quality in higher education. During this phase, NAAC produced manuals and literature on accreditation and quality enhancement. While some colleges embraced NAAC's certification enthusiastically, others were reluctant. In 1999, nine colleges voluntarily underwent evaluation, contributing to educational improvement.

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Phase II- From The Year 1999 To 2002

During this period, the assessment activities gained more recognition and publicity. A state-level cell for quality assurance, supported by NAAC, engaged State Governments in various operations. The Higher Education Directorate conducted programs to maintain and enhance quality. In 2001, after consulting with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), NAAC devised a National Action Plan to involve state governments in quality enhancement and assessment activities. The state governments cooperated with the accreditation process and facilitated seminars, orientation programs, and discussions to raise awareness of accreditation's importance. In 2001, NAAC hosted the biannual conference of the INQAAHE, creating an academic atmosphere. In 2002, the MHRD declared it the "year of quality in higher education," and NAAC conducted numerous campaigns across the country to raise awareness. The accreditation process became more responsive to the Indian context, with six states making certification mandatory.

Table-2. Grading System from 1999 to 2002:

Grading System	
Grade	**Institutional Score** (Upper limit exclusive)
A*****	100>=75
A****	70-75
A***	65-70
A**	60-65
A*	55-60

Limitations of the existing system included initial attempts to differentiate higher education based on performance. The "star" grading system, often criticized for its wide grading range, sparked a "hotel" mentality, as achieving the highest grade was relatively easy with any score above 75. Responding to these concerns, the UGC Committee on NAAC's Policy and Procedures recommended replacing the star grading with a 9-point system in 2001, which NAAC adopted in 2002. NAAC also collects feedback and inputs from stakeholders every five years to fine-tune its methodology and grading system, engaging in discussions with various stakeholders, bureaucrats, policymakers, academicians, and NAAC senior officials to better align with India's higher education system.

Phase III- From The Year 2002 To 2007: (Significant Number Of Accreditations)

The national action plan and state government initiatives have significantly encouraged HEIs to seek NAAC certification. This shift from initial resistance to acceptance led to NAAC accrediting 1023 institutions in 2003–2004, 1071 in 2004–2005, 478 in 2005–2006, and 627 in 2006–2007. Notably, several innovative projects were initiated, including the Annual National Meeting of State Commissioners/Directors of Higher Education. During this period, NAAC also released a variety of Best Practices on topics

such as Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Library and Information Services, Community Engagement, Student Evaluation, Student Feedback and Participation, and Curriculum Development. These endeavours saw the establishment of IQAC in over 2000 institutions, with NAAC supporting more than 200 seminars and workshops. In 2005–2006, it was designated as the "Year of Student Participation in Quality Assurance." This involved conferences and workshops supported by NAAC. The following year, 2006–2007, was termed the "Year of Promoting Internal Quality Assurance Systems," featuring a national workshop on IQAC and various sponsored workshops. NAAC, during this period, trained about 800 assessors, provided training for teacher educators under the NAAC- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and NAAC-COL initiatives, and developed a methodology for the Second Cycle of A&A. The scoring system for Re-Accreditation changed from 100 to 1000 points, while the grading scheme based on Key Aspects/Micro-Indicators remained consistent. To promote quality assurance, NAAC encouraged each certified institution to establish an IQAC. This body aimed to achieve quality goals by integrating into the institution's structure. Institutions were required to meet Minimum Institutional Requirements (MIRs) for Re-Accreditation, maintain a functional IQAC, have a website, ensure compliance with prior assessment reports, and submit an Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) to NAAC. To enhance the accreditation process, workshops for self-study report preparation and assessment methodology were conducted. Feedback from peer teams and universities refined the technique. Businesspeople were added as observers during the re-accreditation process to foster industry-institutional relations. NAAC examined accredited institutions across different states, with reports from ten states made public. "Table 3" presents the Grading System from 2002 to 2007[2].

Table 3. Grading System from 2002 to 2007:

Grading System 9-Point scale	
Grade	**Institutional Score** (Upper limit exclusive)
A++	95-100
A+	90-95
A	85-90
B++	80-85
B+	75-80
B	70-75
C++	65-70
C+	60-65
C	55-60

An institution needs to score more than 55% to obtain “Accredited” status, otherwise, it is considered “Not Accredited”. The above scale values were used to rank the

accredited institutions on a scale of one to nine. Approximately 3,500 HEIs were evaluated in this period. Many eminent scholars suggested modifications to the evaluation procedure, grading system, and peer team performance. Therefore, the methodology and grading system were revised. Additionally, this was the time when new methods were being developed.

Limitations of the existing system

The UGC, to align with global evaluation standards, prompted NAAC to transition from the previous 9-point scale to a new system of Four-letter grades. The 9-point scale was criticized for its complexity and numerous scaling points, making it challenging for many to comprehend. In response to these issues, NAAC sought a more practical evaluation method, leading to the abandonment of the old grading system and the adoption of a new one.

This shift also entailed a move from the percentage scoring patterns to a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) system. These changes aim to overcome the limitations of the previous technique and expedite the assessment of a broader range of institutions.

NAAC's commitment to improving its methodology and accreditation system is evident in its practice of collecting feedback and inputs from various stakeholders in higher education every five years. This feedback, combined with discussions involving stakeholders, bureaucrats, policymakers, academicians, and NAAC senior officials, contributes to adapting the grading system to better suit India's Higher Education Institution system.

Phase IV Methodology Shift Since 2007 To 2017:

NAAC always strives to keep up with the changing needs and challenges of HEIs. It regularly updates its process to make it more reliable and effective. After assessing and accrediting approximately 3500 HEIs, NAAC decided to revise the manuals and accentuate the level of quality standards and indicators. The purpose of this revision effort was to create a quality improvement strategy that was consistent with the organization's vision and goal. The New Methodology was implemented on April 1st, 2007. The criteria, key aspects, and core indicators were designed to bring about a methodology more rigorous and robust. The updated system of grading uses three (A, B, C) letter grades along with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) for accredited institutions and a D for non-accredited institutions. This replaces the previous nine (9) point letter grades. The CGPA reflects the quality level of the institution. "Table 4" gives an appendix with the Grading System from 2007 to 2017[3]:

Grading System 9-Point scale		
Range of HEIs (CGPA)	**Grade Letter**	**Descriptor of Performance**
4.00 - 3.01	A	Very Good (Accredited)
3.00 - 2.01	B	Good (Accredited)
2.00 - 1.51	C	Satisfactory (Accredited)
< 1.50	D	Unsatisfactory (Not accredited)

Table-4. Grading System from 2007 to 2017:

The NAAC has established five core values for its accreditation framework, which are: (i) Contributing to national progress; (ii) Developing global skills among students; (iii) Nurturing a value system in students; (iv) Encouraging the use of technology; and (v) Striving for excellence.

The Rashtriya Uchchattar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is an exhaustive development plan for HEIs in India. It was launched in 2013 by the Indian Ministry of Education. The program aims to provide targeted funding to HEIs across the nation. The union territories (UT) along with state governments collaborate with the central Project Appraisal Board to coordinate funding and oversee the academic, administrative, and financial achievements made under the program. The NAAC A&A has been connected to RUSA grants. As part of the necessary quality assurance system, ensure that all state institutions have acquired NAAC certification by the end of March 2020. The goal is to increase access to HEIs while maintaining high standards Governments must ensure that all their educational institutions acquire NAAC accreditation as a requirement for quality assurance, while also working to improve overall academic standards through reforms.

As a result of NAAC grade, which is listed below, the RUSA funding will be released to HEIs under different components [4].

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Table 5. State Wise RUSA Grant Released (RUSA1.0 & RUSA 2.0)

SL. No	RUSA Components	NAAC Grade (Minimum)
1	Creation of Universities by Up gradation of Existing Autonomous College	CGPA 3.51 - 4.00
2	Creation of Universities by conversion of colleges in a Cluster	CGPA 3.51 - 4.00
3	Infrastructure Grants to Universities	CGPA 2.50 - 3.25
4	Quality and Excellence in select State Universities	CGPA 3.51 - 4.00
5	Up gradation of existing Degree Colleges to Model Degree Colleges	CGPA 2.00 - 2.50
6	Enhancing Quality and Excellence in select Autonomous Colleges	CGPA 3.51 - 4.00
7	Infrastructure Grants to Colleges	CGPA 2.50 - 4.00
8	Research, Innovation & Quality Improvement	CGPA 3.51 - 4.00
9	Faculty Recruitment Support	CGPA 3.51 - 4.00

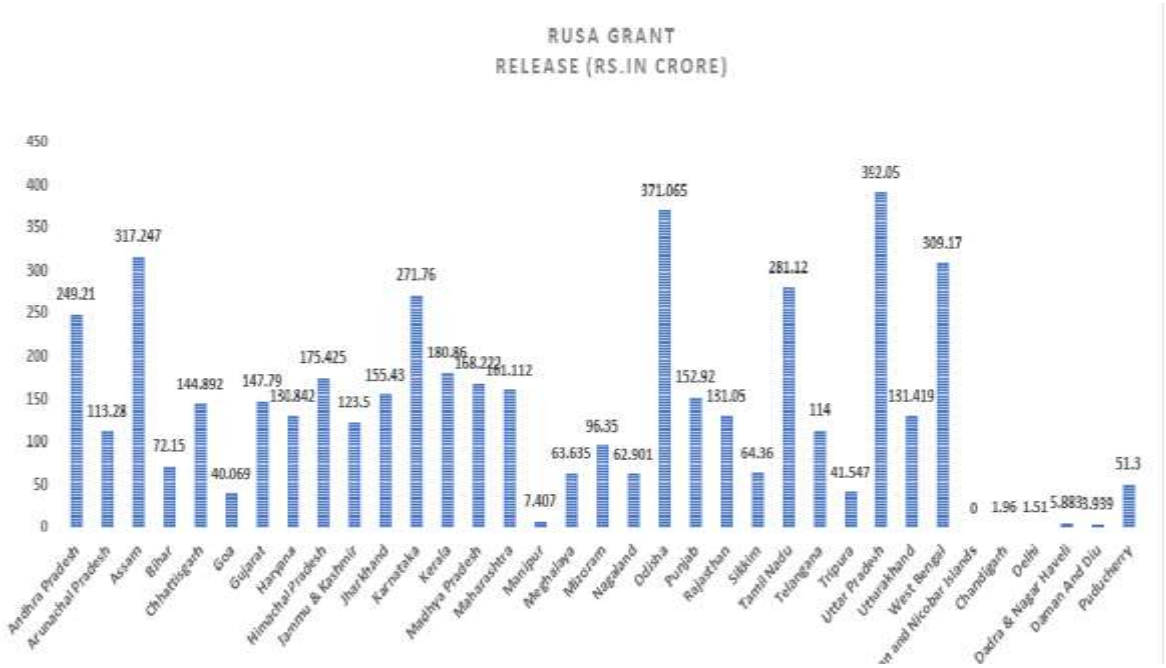

Figure 1. State-Wise RUSA Grant Released

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Table 6. State-Wise RUSA Grant Released (RUSA1.0 & RUSA 2.0)[5]

SL.NO	Name of State/ UT	RUSA 1.0 (Releases Rs.in Cr)	RUSA 2.0 (Releases Rs.in Cr)	Total (Releases Rs.in Cr)
1	Andhra Pradesh	149.11	100.1	249.21
2	Arunachal Pradesh	67.89	45.39	113.28
3	Assam	233.547	83.7	317.247
4	Bihar	58.65	13.5	72.15
5	Chhattisgarh	116.392	28.5	144.892
6	Goa	35.569	4.5	40.069
7	Gujarat	118.99	28.8	147.79
8	Haryana	72.542	58.3	130.842
9	Himachal Pradesh	163.725	11.7	175.425
10	Jammu & Kashmir	123.5	0	123.5
11	Jharkhand	151.83	3.6	155.43
12	Karnataka	219.56	52.2	271.76
13	Kerala	98.36	82.5	180.86
14	Madhya Pradesh	126.222	42	168.222
15	Maharashtra	103.412	57.7	161.112
16	Manipur	7.407	0	7.407
17	Meghalaya	50.135	13.5	63.635
18	Mizoram	78.35	18	96.35
19	Nagaland	57.501	5.4	62.901
20	Odisha	313.665	57.4	371.065
21	Punjab	124.32	28.6	152.92
22	Rajasthan	131.05	0	131.05
23	Sikkim	41.86	22.5	64.36
24	Tamil Nadu	212.17	68.95	281.12
25	Telangana	89.3	24.7	114
26	Tripura	41.547	0	41.547
27	Uttar Pradesh	392.05	0	392.05
28	Uttarakhand	104.419	27	131.419
29	West Bengal	192.07	117.1	309.17
30	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	0	0
31	Chandigarh	1.96	0	1.96
32	Delhi	1.51	0	1.51
33	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	5.883	0	5.883
34	Daman And Diu	3.939	0	3.939
35	Puducherry	51.3	0	51.3
	Total	3739.735	995.64	4735.375

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Limitations of existing system (2007 TO 2017)

Pros:

- The Accreditation and Assessment process conducted by onsite members encompass both Qualitative (QnM) and Quantitative metrics (QlM), ensuring a comprehensive evaluation in a single stage.
- NAAC's transition from a four-grade system to an eight-grade system aimed to make the Accreditation and Assessment process more rigorous and legitimate, raising the quality threshold for higher education institutions (HEIs).
- Regular feedback collection from various stakeholders, including bureaucrats, policymakers, academicians, and NAAC senior officials, allows for fine-tuning the grading system to align with India's evolving higher education landscape.

Cons:

- The initial process didn't include mechanisms for Data Validation and Verification (DVV) of submitted documents through automation, potentially introducing errors or inaccuracies.
- Conducting the entire evaluation process in a single stage might have posed challenges and limitations, potentially affecting the depth and accuracy of assessments.

Phase V A Revised Framework For Accreditation (RAF) From 2017 To Current Date:

The NAAC is in the process of modernizing its A&A methodology to adapt to evolving trends, educational reforms, and global challenges in higher education institutions (HEIs). This revamp involves key stakeholders' input, best practices, and NAAC's own insights, with the process kick-started by a workshop in February 2017. Following the workshop and feedback from the MHRD and UGC, a Revised Accreditation Framework (RAF) draft emerged. Core Working Groups (CWG) and Sectoral Working Groups (SWG) were assembled to review and enhance the RAF. In parallel, a Quality Indicator Framework (QIF) for HEI quality assessment materialized, drawing insights from numerous CWG and SWG meetings[6]. The QIF was released on the NAAC website and garnered significant attention for a Pilot project. This innovative framework prioritizes reliability, objectivity, transparency, outcome orientation, and stakeholder inclusiveness. It's a collaborative effort involving stakeholders and emphasizes quantitative data collection for evaluation while documenting qualitative assessments. The grading system is retained, with a stronger focus on ICT and outcomes.

Table-7. Grading System from 2017 to Current Date

Grading System 9-Point scale		
Range of HEIs (CGPA)	**Grade Letter**	**Status**
4.00 - 3.51	A++	Accredited
3.50 - 3.26	A+	Accredited
3.25 - 3.01	A	Accredited
3.00 - 2.76	B++	Accredited
2.75 - 2.51	B+	Accredited
2.50 - 2.01	B	Accredited
2.00 - 1.50	C	Accredited
≤ 1.50	D	Not accredited

REVISED ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK (RAF)

The Revised Accreditation Framework (RAF) represents a paradigm shift in how accreditation is conducted. It's designed to leverage Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to achieve objectivity, transparency, scalability, and robustness. It differs from the previous approach in several ways[6]:

- It relies on quantitative data analysis instead of qualitative peer review to enhance fairness and openness.
- It utilizes the proven scalability and robustness of ICT, which is widely used in various domains.
- It simplifies the process by cutting down on the number of visits, queries, reports, and other obligations.
- It encourages benchmarking as a way to improve quality by comparing NAAC indicators with other global QA frameworks.
- It sets a minimum score of 30% by the algorithm as a pre-requisite for peer team visits.
- System Generated Scores (SGS) are produced by combining peer review (30%) with online evaluation (about 70%).
- It introduces data validation by a third party as an additional feature.
- It provides appropriate distinctions in the criteria, weightages, and benchmarks for affiliated/constituent institutions, autonomous colleges and universities.
- It updates some indicators to involve more students and alumni in the evaluation process.

Understanding the RAF Accreditation Procedures

The process of A&A has three steps now. To add more value, NAAC uses ICT to include the Student Satisfaction Survey and check the accuracy and reliability of the data.

- Combination of IIQA and SSR: IIQA and SSR serve as indicators of the HEI's commitment to the A&A process.
- DVV and Pre-qualifier Score: This stage involves the online analysis and evaluation of submitted information. Institutions scoring less than 30% on QnM indicators become eligible for onsite peer review.
- Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) Preparation: The SSS is the subsequent step, aiming to collect feedback from at least 10% of enrolled students.
- Onsite Assessment and Peer Review by Visiting Teams: This phase focuses on the qualitative component of evaluation. HEIs must score at least 30% for accreditation. A team of peer reviewers nominated by NAAC conducts the assessment.

For the accreditation process to proceed smoothly, HEIs must ensure their preparations are in order, with proper documentation. They can benefit from the guidance of an expert who can help them navigate this process. The NAAC RAF is an essential step to strengthen India's higher education system. It will enable colleges to be prepared for the bigger changes that NEP 2020 will bring, such as multidisciplinary undergraduate and postgraduate programs[7]. The evaluation is based on the subsequent seven criteria. the performance and quality of HEIs:

1) Curricular Aspects
2) Teaching-Learning and Evaluation
3) Research, Innovations and Extension
4) Infrastructure and Learning Resources
5) Student Support and Progression
6) Governance, Leadership and Management
7) Institutional Values and Best Practices

The Assessment Process

The A&A process for HEIs has three stages and three primary components: SSR, SSS and Peer Team Report (PTR). HEIs are separated into three groups based on their type of institution: Affiliated/Constituent Colleges, Autonomous Colleges and Universities. The SSR covers seven Criteria with different numbers of Metrics for each category. The Metrics are either quantitative (QnM) or qualitative (QlM), based on the kind of data they require. "Table 8" shows how the Key Indicators (KIs) and Metrics are distributed among them and "Table 9" gives the detailed key metrics and weightage for various types of institutions.

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Table 8. Distribution of Metrics and KIs Across Criteria

Type of HEIs	Universities[8]	Autonomous Colleges[9]	Affiliated/Constituent Colleges[10]
Criteria	7	7	7
Key Indicators (KIs)	34	34	32
Qualitative Metrics (Q_lM)	32	35	22
Quantitative Metrics (Q_nM)	55	50	34
Total Metrics (Q_lM + Q_nM)	**87**	**85**	**56**

Table 9. Weights Assigned to Various Key Indicators (KIs)

Criteria	Key Indicators (KIs)	Universities[8]	Autonomous Colleges[9]	Affiliated / Constituent Colleges[10]
1. Curricular Aspects	1.1 ***(U)**Curriculum Design and Development	**50**	**50**	**NA**
	1.1. ***(A)** Curricular Planning and Implementation	**NA**	**NA**	**20**
	1.2 Academic Flexibility	**30**	**30**	**30**
	1.3 Curriculum Enrichment	**50**	**50**	**30**
	1.4 Feedback System	**20**	**20**	**20**
	Total	**150**	**150**	**100**
2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation	2.1 Student Enrolment and	**10**	**20**	**40**
	2.2 Catering to Student Diversity	**20**	**30**	**40**
	2.3 Teaching-Learning Process	**20**	**50**	**40**
	2.4 Teacher Profile and Quality	**60**	**50**	**40**
	2.5 Evaluation Process and Reforms	**30**	**50**	**40**
	2.6 Student Performance and Learning Outcomes	**30**	**50**	**90**
	2.7 Student satisfaction Survey	**30**	**50**	**60**

	Total	**200**	**300**	**350**
3. Research, Innovations and Extension	3.1 Promotion of Research and Facilities	**20**	**20**	**NA**
	3.2 Resource Mobilization for Research	**40**	**10**	**10**
	3.3 Innovation Ecosystem	**20**	**10**	**15**
	3.4 Research Publications and Awards	**120**	**30**	**25**
	3.5 Consultancy	**20**	**10**	**NA**
	3.6 Extension Activities	**20**	**50**	**40**
	3.7 Collaboration	**10**	**20**	**20**
	Total	**250**	**150**	**110**
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources	4.1 Physical Facilities	**30**	**30**	**30**
	4.2 Library as a Learning Resource	**20**	**20**	**20**
	4.3 IT Infrastructure	**30**	**30**	**30**
	4.4 Maintenance of Campus Infrastructure	**20**	**20**	**20**
	Total	**100**	**100**	**100**
5. Student Support and Progression	5.1 Student Support	**30**	**30**	**50**
	5.2 Student Progression	**45**	**30**	**35**
	5.3 Student Participation and Activities	**15**	**30**	**45**
	5.4 Alumni Engagement	**10**	**10**	**10**
	Total	**100**	**100**	**140**
6. Governance, Leadership and Management	6.1 Institutional Vision and	**15**	**15**	**15**
	6.2 Strategy Development and Deployment	**10**	**10**	**12**
	6.3 Faculty Empowerment Strategies	**25**	**30**	**33**
	6.4 Financial Management and Resource Mobilization	**20**	**15**	**10**
	6.5 Internal Quality Assurance System	**30**	**30**	**30**
	Total	**100**	**100**	**100**
7. Institutional Values and Best Practices	7.1 Institutional Values and Social Responsibilities	**50**	**50**	**50**
	7.2 Best Practices	**30**	**30**	**30**
	7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness	**20**	**20**	20
	Total	**100**	**100**	**100**
	TOTAL	**1000 ***	**1000 ***	**1000 ***

"Table 10" gives the statistics of the accreditation under the RAF from 2018-19 to till date and the graphical representation shown in " Figure 3"

Table 10. Visit by a Peer Team under RAF (Year-Wise)

Sr. No.	Financial Year	Universities	Colleges	Total Number of Institutions accredited
1)	2018-19	45	779	824
2)	2019-20	29	705	734
3)	2020-21	19	300	319
4)	2021-22	78	623	701
5)	2022-23	105	1683	1788
6)	2023-24*	53	630	683
	Total	329	4720	5049

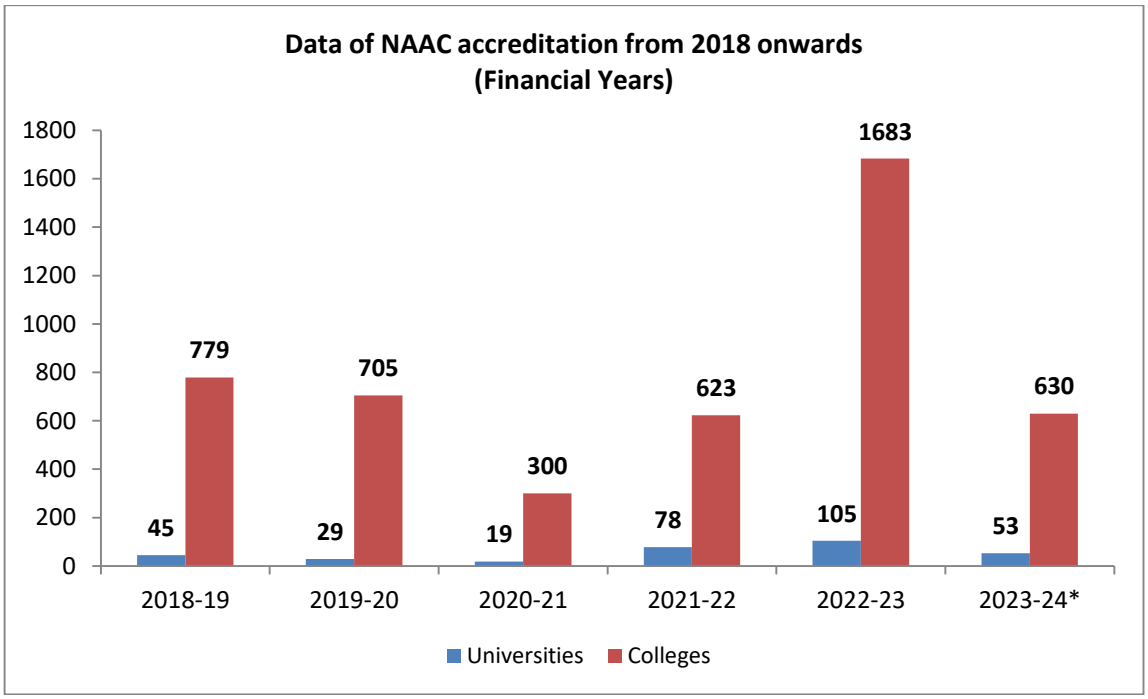

Figure 2. Visit by a Peer team under RAF both College and University

Proposed Shift in India's Higher Education Institution Accreditation System

The shift in India's Higher Education Institution (HEI) accreditation approach from qualitative to quantitative methods stems from the practice of benchmarking. Despite

several years of implementation, numerous debates continue to surround this grading system. The unique characteristics of India's higher education system necessitate an accreditation framework tailored to its distinctive features, making a one-size-fits-all international model inappropriate. In a report prepared by the Overarching Committee, chaired by Dr. K. Radhakrishnan and appointed by the Ministry of Education in November 2022, a new "Adapted Binary Accreditation System" was proposed[11]. This system replaces the existing 8-point grading scheme, which includes Accredited and Non-accredited categories, with two subcategories: "Awaiting Accreditation" (indicating institutions on the verge of accreditation) and "Not Accredited" (signifying institutions falling significantly below accreditation standards)[11].

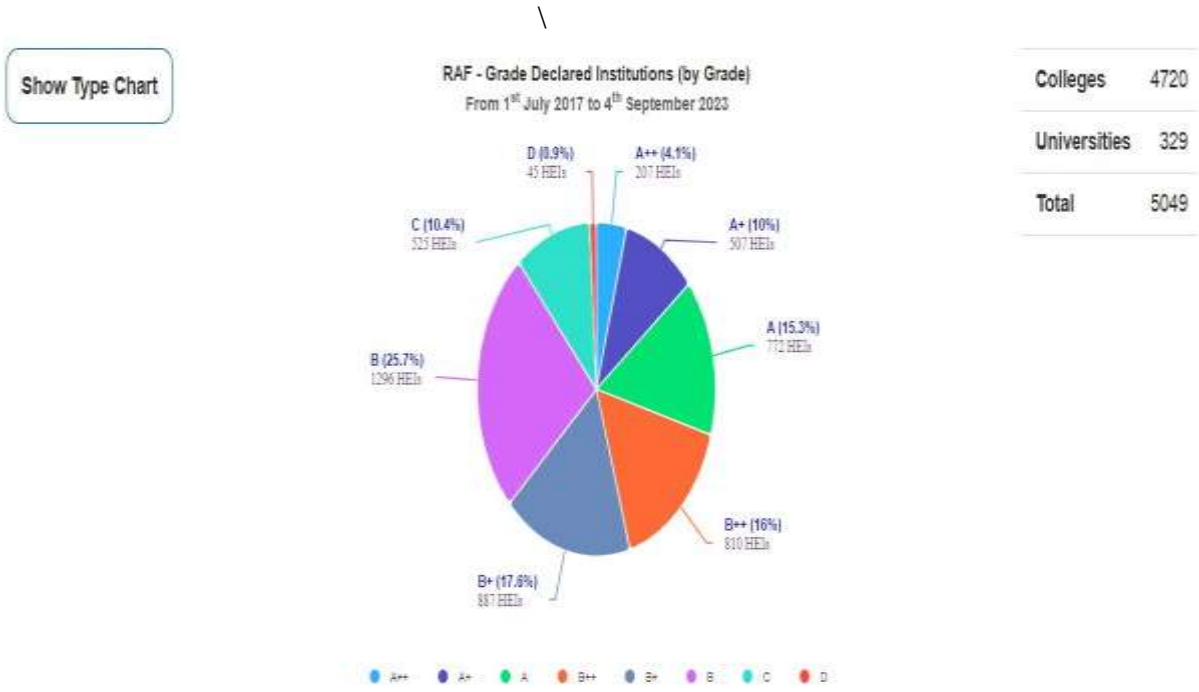

Figure 3. Peer team visit under RAF(grade-wise)[12]

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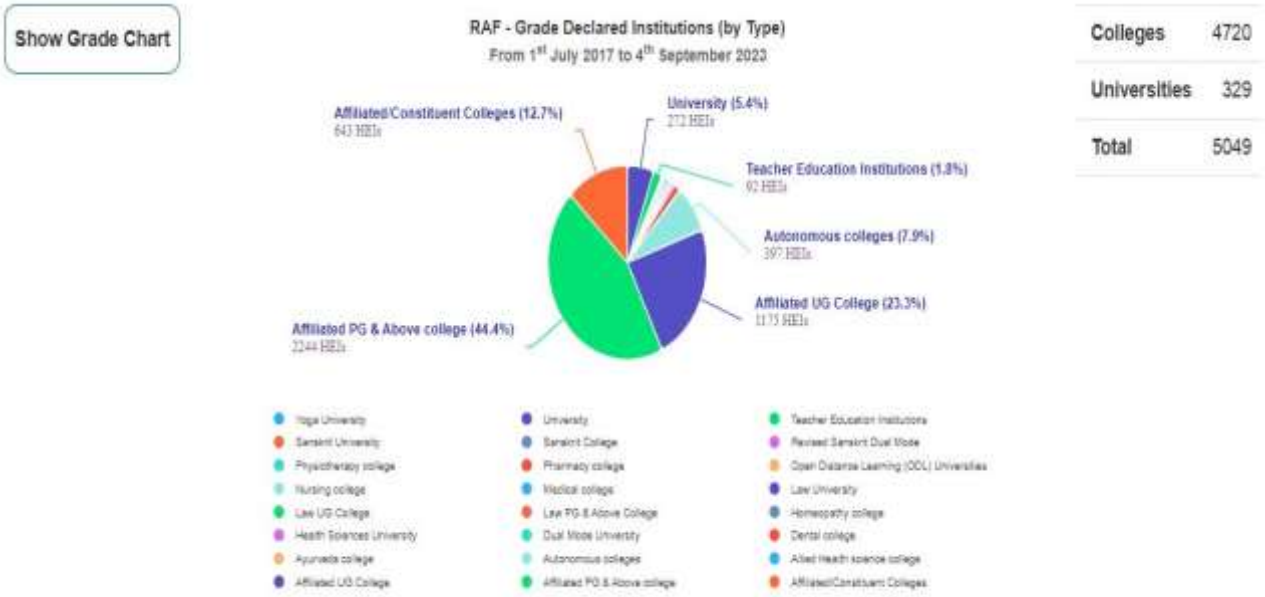

Figure 4. Peer team visit under RAF (HEIs type)[12]

CONCLUSION

Accreditation helps the institution to enhance its quality and reputation in the society. It helps the institution to assess its advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and difficulties while concentrating on internal planning and resource allocation. It also fosters a culture of collaboration and communication among the campus community. Many institutions have updated curricula and adopted modern and innovative teaching methods for the benefit of the students. Accreditation gives the institution a fresh sense of purpose and self with increased accountability and credibility. A systematic approach to studying the results of the NAAC assessment was not followed. The approach should be robust to capture both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the process. A good evaluation should also include an evaluation of the evaluation process itself. There can be many problems in an evaluation, such as bias, technical error, logistical issues, and misuse. These audits are necessary to improve the ongoing evaluation activities and to judge the effectiveness of the completed evaluation process.

It is suggested that NAAC may think that a meta-evaluation is needed which is an instrument used to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It also involves an evaluation of the quality of this series of evaluations and its adherence to established good practices in evaluation.

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