

**NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: ACCREDITATION AS AN ENABLER OF  
REGULATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Lead Research Consultant

**Dr. Madhukar B S**  
Former Adviser, NAAC

Research Team

**Dr. M Bhaskara Rao**  
Associate Professor, IBS, IFHE, Hyderabad

**Dr. Padmavathi B S**  
Professor & Head, Education Unit, CESS

**Ms. Dharani S**  
Senior Associate, CESS

**A Research Study Undertaken by CESS and Supported by IFHE**



**Centre for Educational and Social Studies**



## **About Centre for Educational and Social Studies (CESS)**

Centre for Educational and Social Studies (CESS), based in Bengaluru, is a full-fledged not-for-profit society registered under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act 1960. The vision of CESS is to bring about “Social Transformation through and with education”.

CESS mission is to engage in Research, Capacity Building and Policy Advocacy in the domain of Education. CESS engages all the stakeholders across the realm of Education viz. policy makers, regulators, Universities, colleges, academicians, researchers, teachers, students and parents. It has positioned itself to meet the current challenges in the society keeping education as the focal point. Since its inception, CESS has conducted more than 100 seminars and webinars at the state and national level.

CESS has MoUs with Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University (KSRDPRU), Gadag and Tumkur University, Tumkur to undertake research projects, capacity building programmes and designing new courses. The Management Research Centre of the CESS is recognized by Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi.

## **About ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE)**

The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE) is a Deemed-to-be-University established under section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956. It has evolved a comprehensive student-centric learning approach consisting of several stages, designed to add significant value to the learner’s understanding in an integrated manner, covering relevant knowledge, practical skills and positive attitude.

It offers programs in Management, Science & Technology, Engineering, Architecture, Law and Economics at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels. The students are from all parts of India. We envision to develop a new cadre of professionals who will not only command high level of domain proficiency but also have the ability to integrate activities for developing scientific and technological solutions and work standards.

The University maintains a balance between academic, co-curricular, extra-curricular, and social activities so as to enable the students to become well-rounded persons with concern for the society.

**Disclaimer:**

This report is an outcome of research work of the team of researchers from the CESS and the IFHE. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the Research Team and do not necessarily reflect the views of either the CESS or the IFHE. Both the CESS and the IFHE do not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this report. The responsibility for omissions and commissions is solely with the Research Team.

# Contents

Foreword.....	<b>i-ii</b>
Message .....	<b>iii</b>
Preface .....	<b>iv</b>
Acknowledgements.....	<b>v</b>
Abbreviations.....	<b>vi-viii</b>
Definitions.....	<b>ix</b>
Executive Summary .....	<b>x</b>
1. Introduction .....	<b>1-4</b>
1.1. Context.....	1-4
1.2. About the Study .....	4
1.3. Chapterisation .....	4
2. An Overview of Indian and International Accreditation in Higher Education .....	<b>5-17</b>
2.1. Purposes of Accreditation .....	5
2.2. Accreditation and Ranking of HEIs in India.....	5-6
2.3. Analysis of Accreditation and Ranking in India .....	6-10
2.3.1. Analysis of NAAC Accredited Institutions.....	6-8
2.3.2. Analysis of NBA Accredited Institutions.....	8-9
2.3.3. Analysis of NIRF Ranked Institutions .....	9-10
2.4. NAAC Accreditation Process: Value Addition .....	10-11
2.5. Accreditation: An International Perspective .....	11-17
2.5.1. NEP 2020 and Internationalization of HEIs .....	11-12
2.5.2. International Practices in Accreditation.....	12-15
2.5.3. Ranking of HEIs .....	15-17
3. Accreditations Reforms under NEP 2020 .....	<b>18-22</b>
4. Research Design .....	<b>23-26</b>
4.1. Research Framework .....	23
4.2. Objectives of the Study.....	24
4.3. Methodology .....	24-25
4.4. Aspects of Regulation Addressed by Accreditation in the Last Few Years .....	25-26
5. Analysis of Accreditation Systems in India .....	<b>27-31</b>
5.1. SWOC Analysis of Accreditation Systems in India.....	27-29
5.2. Issues in Present Accreditation System.....	29-31

6.	Data Analysis and Findings .....	<b>32-40</b>
6.1.	Autonomy .....	32-34
6.2.	Accreditation and Quality/Regulation.....	34-35
6.3.	Awareness.....	35
6.4.	Participants' Perspective on Accreditation and Quality/Regulation .....	35-37
6.4.1.	Head of Institutions.....	36
6.4.2.	IQAC Coordinators .....	36
6.4.3.	Faculty Members .....	36-37
6.5.	Users' Perspective on Quality/Regulation and IQAC.....	37-39
6.5.1.	Students.....	37-39
6.5.1.1.	Awareness of Accreditation before joining HEI .....	37-38
6.5.1.2.	Availing of Educational Loan from Banks.....	38-39
6.5.2.	Alumni.....	39
6.5.3.	Employers .....	39
6.5.4.	Bankers .....	39
6.6.	Conclusion .....	40
7.	Accreditation Framework in the Perspective of NEP 2020.....	<b>41- 52</b>
7.1.	Regulation through Accreditation .....	41-42
7.2.	Core vs. Subordinate Framework .....	42-44
7.3.	Accreditation and Path to Full Autonomy for HEIs.....	44-45
7.4.	Accreditation of Universities .....	45-46
7.5.	Binary Accreditation .....	46
7.6.	Internal Quality Assurance.....	46-47
7.7.	2QT - Three Determinants of Accreditation .....	47-48
7.8.	Use of Predictive Analytics in Accreditation .....	48
7.9.	International Practices.....	48
7.10.	Peer Team Functioning and Review .....	48
7.11.	ODL/Online/Dual Mode Education.....	49
7.12.	Perspectives of Employers on Accreditation .....	49-50
7.13.	Perspectives of Bankers/Financiers on Accreditation.....	50
7.14.	Accelerating Accreditation of Colleges .....	50-51
7.15.	Developing Leadership Pipeline for HEIs .....	51
7.16.	Sustainable Development Goals .....	51
7.17.	Need to Conduct an Impact Analysis.....	51-52

Future Study Imperatives.....	53-54
Bibliography .....	55-56

**Annexures ..... 57**

Annexure I - Government Bodies Responsible for Assessment and Accreditation in India .....	57-58
Annexure II - Internal Mechanism for Accreditation: Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) .....	59-60
Annexure III - Quality Initiatives by UGC and AICTE.....	61
Annexure IV - Autonomy versus Accreditation.....	62-64
Annexure V - Qualitative Responses from Stakeholders .....	65-69

**Research Expert Consultants.....**

**List of Figures**

Figure 1.1 – Four Verticals of HECI .....	3
Figure 2.1 – RAF Grade Declared Institutions (Universities + Colleges).....	6
Figure 2.2 – RAF Grade Declared Institutions – Universities .....	7
Figure 2.3 – RAF Grade Declared Institutions – Colleges .....	7
Figure 4.1 – Research Framework .....	23
Figure 7.1 – Framework for Regulation through Accreditation.....	43
Figure 7.2 – Path for Full Autonomy .....	44
Figure 7.3 – Process of Acquiring Binary Accreditation by University .....	45
Figure 7.4 – Three Determinants of Accreditation .....	47

**List of Tables**

Table 2.1 – Accreditation Systems of Select /Countries and Regions .....	13-14
Table 2.2 – Comparative Focus of Reputed International Accrediting Agencies vis-à-vis NBA .....	14-15
Figure 2.3 – Comparison of International Accreditation and International Ratings.....	16
Figure 3.1 – Provisions in NEP 2020.....	18-21
Figure 5.2 – Issues in the Present Accreditation System .....	29-30

## Foreword



**Prof. M K Sridhar**

President, Centre for Educational and Social Studies (CESS)

The National Education Policy 2020, unveiled on July 29, 2020 is hailed as the game changer for India's education system. India's higher education system is now on the threshold of a paradigm shift as the Policy recommends for transformational changes with respect to its curriculum, structure, governance and regulation. Government's vision being access to 'high-quality education for all', the Policy strives to create an eco-system wherein quality education becomes a norm and not an exception. India's education system, especially the higher education sector is poised to experience disruptive changes.

The Policy envisages a system in which the functions of regulation, accreditation, funding and academic standard setting would be performed by distinct, independent and empowered bodies under the apex regulator viz., Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The Policy envisages accreditation as the primary mechanism through which the transformative regulatory system will be implemented. Accreditation will determine the institutional autonomy with respect to dimensions like academics, governance and finance. To deal with the significant growth of HEIs, a meta-accrediting body with licensed accrediting institutions under its supervision is being set up. Accreditation of HEIs, thus, will no longer be voluntary, but mandatory to ensure that Indian HEIs are able to compete globally.

This project supported by the ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE), Hyderabad is a collaborative endeavor to study the present assessment and accreditation systems vis-à-vis the accreditation system recommended in NEP 2020. The study findings are an outcome of the stakeholders' survey and expert consultations. Despite the limitations caused by the coronavirus pandemic, efforts were made to reach out to a large number of stakeholders to ensure pan-India representation. The study brings forth the importance of accreditation as a tool to enhance the quality of higher education and regulation.

I take this opportunity to thank Prof. J. Mahender Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, IFHE for making this joint study happen. Our collaboration for this study not only reflects the spirit of the NEP 2020 but also stands as an example of how institutions could partner for knowledge creation in the coming days. I extend my thanks to Prof. M. Bhaskara Rao, IFHE and Dr. Madhukar B S, former Adviser, NAAC for leading the research study. My appreciation to Dr. Padmavathi B S, Ms. Dharani S. and team at CESS for facilitating the research study.

December 24, 2021  
President, CESS

Prof. M.K. Sridhar

## Message



**Prof. J. Mahender Reddy**

Vice Chancellor

The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education

At the outset I thank Centre for Educational and Social Studies for giving us this opportunity to work together and contribute to one important dimension of implementation of National Education Policy 2020 at this inflection point. I thank Prof. M K Sridhar, President, CESS for reposing faith in undertaking this project work collaboratively with IFHE. I commend the project team comprising Dr. Madhukar B S, Dr. M Bhaskara Rao, Dr. Padmavathi B S and Ms. Dharani S for undertaking this study.

I am indeed happy that the collaborative project between CESS and IFHE titled “National Education Policy 2020: Accreditation as an enabler of Regulation in Higher Education” is successfully completed and the report is ready for submission to the authorities concerned.

The National Education Policy 2020 is a path breaking, forward looking and innovative initiative by the Union Government which would ensure Indian higher education an important role both nationally and internationally and catapult India to be a Vishwa Guru. Restructuring the accreditation system is much needed considering the structural changes and reorganization of HEIs to meet the future demands of education and scholarship. Accreditation as an enabler of regulation is a laudable goal. This would bring in much needed responsibility, accountability, transparency and good governance among the HEIs when preparing them for autonomy and prosperity.

I am sure that the findings and recommendations of this report would be useful for the regulatory authorities in framing the right policies in architecting the higher education that would truly be a game changer.

December 24, 2021

J. Mahender Reddy  
Vice Chancellor, IFHE

## Preface

This is a study undertaken at the macro level to understand the strengths and challenges of the present accreditation system largely as practiced by major accrediting bodies in India. National Assessment and Accreditation Council has been the primary reference organization for the study for a reason that it has two decades of institutional accreditation to its credit, and has accredited the largest number of institutions in the country. Apart from the external accreditation aspect, it has also promoted the concept of Internal Quality Assurance right from its inception.

The challenge faced in the study was to correlate the accreditation experience which is based on past data to the situation as envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020 towards using accreditation as a regulatory function.

The study has been conducted by undertaking pan-India survey by administering questionnaire through online mode to direct and indirect stakeholders of the Higher Education System. Apart from administering the questionnaires, a consultative process was adopted through interaction and interviews with the experts in the field.

The wise council of Prof. M K Sridhar and others was very useful in the construct of the study. The contribution of each member of the research team is acknowledged. I thank Prof. A Vasumathi, Professor and Associate Dean, VIT Business School, VIT, Vellore for providing support in the statistical analysis of data. Also, sincere thanks to Prof. L N Seshagiri, Associate Professor, Government First Grade College, Jayanagar Bangalore for his support in copy-editing the report.

I am grateful to the expert/consultants for their views and suggestions.

Depth of gratitude to Prof. M K Sridhar, President and Officials at CESS, Prof. J Mahender Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education for making this study possible. Also, thanks to all the officials at CESS and other organizations for their direct or indirect support to the study.

December 24, 2021

Dr. Madhukar B S

## **Acknowledgements**

At the outset we express our profound thanks to Prof. M.K. Sridhar, President, CESS, Bengaluru and Prof. J. Mahender Reddy, Vice Chancellor, The ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education, Hyderabad for their support and invaluable inputs.

Our sincere thanks to Prof. N. Jayasankaran, Advisor to NMIMS University, former Vice-Chancellor, Kanchi University and Director General, BIM Tiruchirapalli for his deep insights on assessment and accreditation. Also, our sincere gratitude to Dr. A Vasumathi, Professor and Associate Dean – VITBS for her help in the statistical data analysis of the survey data. We express our special thanks to Dr. S.C. Sharma, Director, NAAC for providing us with the required data at the right time.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the experts and stakeholders, especially Prof. K.N. Subramanya, Principal, RVCE for his insightful thoughts.

Most importantly, we are thankful to all the respondents-Heads of the Institutions, IQAC Coordinators, Faculty, Students, Employers, Bankers, and Student Alumni-for sparing their time to fill-in the questionnaires.

Heartfelt thanks to all the expert/consultants for reviewing the final draft of the report and sharing their views and suggestions. Also, we express our heartfelt thanks to Prof. L N Seshagiri, Associate Professor, Government First Grade College, Jayanagar Bangalore for his support in copy-editing the report.

We are always grateful to the Secretary, Mr. Nagraj Reddy and Director, Dr. Gowrisha for motivating us by being a pillar of support and strength throughout the project.

Our sincere appreciation also goes to the Administration and Finance team at CESS and IFHE for extending a very warm support throughout the study period.

### **Research Team**

## Abbreviations

AACSB	Associate to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
AEER	Association for Engineering Education of Russia
AIs	Accrediting Institutions
AICTE	All India Council for Technical Education
AISHE	All India Survey on Higher Education
AQAR	Annual Quality Assurance Report
BCI	Bar Council of India
BoG	Board of Governors
CABE	Central Advisory Board on Education
CESS	Centre for Educational and Social Studies
CHEA	Council for Higher Education and Accreditation
COVID	Novel Coronavirus Disease
CUAP	Committee on University Academic Programs
DCI	Dental Council of India
DEC	Distance Education Council
ENGC	Engineering Council, United Kingdom
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance
EQUIS	EFMD Quality Improvement System
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
ESIB	National Unions of Students in Europe
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
EVC	Expert Visit Committee
GEC	General Education Council
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GoI	Government of India
HE	Higher Education
HECI	Higher Education Council of India
HEGC	Higher Education Governing Council

HEI	Higher Educational Institute
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Institutional Development Plan
IEA	International Engineering Alliance
IET	Institution of Engineering and Technology
IFHE	ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
IISc	Indian Institute of Science
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cell
JUAA	Japan University Accreditation Association
LEAP	Leadership for Academicians Programme
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBI	Mentee Beneficiary Institutes
MCA	Master of Computer Application
MCI	Medical Council of India
MD	Margdharshak
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NAC	National Accreditation Council
NBA	National Board of Accreditation
NCEA	National Certificates of Educational Achievement
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NEP	National Education Policy
NHERC	National Higher Education Regulatory Council
NIRF	National Institutional Ranking Framework
NIT	National Institute of Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority

NZVCC	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee
OBE	Outcome Based Education
OBA	Outcome Based Accreditation
ODL	Open Distance Learning
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCI	Pharmacy Council of India
Ph.D.	Doctor of Philosophy
QA	Quality Assurance
QE	Quality Enhancement
RAF	Revised Accreditation Framework
R&D	Research and Development
RRF	Regulatory Risk Framework
RUSA	Rashtriya Ucchatar Shiksha Abhiyan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSR	Self-Study Report
SM	Social Media
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
UG	Under Graduate
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



## Definitions

**Accreditation:** Accreditation is the certification of quality for a fixed period. It is a process of quality assurance and improvement, whereby a program is critically appraised to verify that the institution or the program continues to meet and/or exceed the norms and standards prescribed by regulator from time to time.

**Assessment:** Assessment is the performance evaluation of an institution or its units based on certain established criteria.

**Ranking:** Ranking is based on objective criteria to promote competitive excellence in the HEIs. Ranking is usually a yearly affair relative to the other similar institutions.

**Autonomy:** Autonomy is a functional status given to the colleges and universities by the regulator of higher education giving greater flexibility towards purely academic development for improvement of academic standards and excellence, generation of financial resources and governance.

**Grade:** The 'grade' given to an institution is the outcome of the assessment process. It is not an absolute measure of quality and only a relative indication for the institutions to know where they stand in a quality continuum.

(Source: NAAC & NIRF)



## Executive Summary

Regulation is a directive made and maintained by authorities in order to control the way things are done. Accreditation in higher education is the process of recognizing achievement of certain standards of performance by HEIs and is mandatory for all HEIs. Accreditation is usually voluntary, but the regulatory authorities are insisting HEIs to get accredited. The outcomes of accreditation in a way indicate compliance behavior on regulations by HEIs. The paradigm change then is, can accreditation drive and become a proxy to regulatory compliance in higher education? Can accreditation be made mandatory for all HEIs?

Assuring quality higher education is a challenge in a dynamic business and social environment. It requires a variety of quality enhancing tools, methodologies and processes to attain desired quality outcomes. Can accreditation processes also encompass metrics to evaluate compliance with regulatory requirements which would then facilitate regulation through accreditation? Although accreditation of HEIs has been in vogue for more than two decades in India, the spirit and focus of NEP 2020 mandates fresh perspectives and improvements in HEI accreditation processes and methodologies to incorporate regulatory requirements in addition to improvement in quality standards and transparency.

NEP 2020 envisages the primary mechanism to enable regulation through accreditation. To achieve this ‘meta-accrediting body’ called the National Accreditation Council (NAC) will be set up. Accreditation of institutions will be based primarily on basic norms, public self-disclosure, good governance, and outcomes, and it will be carried out by an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions supervised and overseen by NAC.

Regulation of higher education has been hitherto characterized by mechanistic approach, disempowering of HEI, conflicts of interest among the regulatory bodies, leading to lack of accountability. The regulatory system is in need of a complete overhaul in order to re-energize higher education and enable it to thrive. Now the time is ripe to revamp, redesign and recognize accreditation of HEIs to not only measure the quality standards of education, but also the compliance of HEI with the regulations which are in vogue.

This report titled “National Education Policy 2020: Accreditation as an Enabler of Regulation in Higher Education” is aimed at policy advocacy for paradigm shift in accreditation system for higher education to make it a game changer and create a future path for Indian higher education to be a global player and establish itself as a Vishwa Guru.



## **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**



## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1.CONTEXT

Higher education plays a prominent role in the creation of resourceful and knowledge-based society. It is also crucial for the social, economic, scientific and political growth and development of a nation. Higher education helps to foster growth, reduce poverty and accelerate prosperity. The primary objective of higher education is to empower youth with innovative, cognitive and creative knowledge and skills through providing quality education. With internationalization of education across the world, there is a mounting concern over the quality of higher education. UNESCO reiterating the need for “Quality Assurance in Higher Education” states that “Over the last two decades, quality assurance in higher education has gained significant momentum worldwide. Major drivers for this momentum include: increased public demand for better performance of higher education institutions, widening of access and a clear call from stakeholders for greater efficiency and accountability, the need for better quality graduates to drive national economies, better use of public resources for higher education and increasing cross-border provisions (UNESCO 2021). With an unprecedented growth in the rate of higher education participation worldwide, UNESCO, along with its partners has been focusing on strengthening quality assurance systems and regulatory frameworks with the involvement of all the stakeholders.

The quality of education being offered among Indian HEIs is assessed through the accreditation and ranking based on various parameters such as teaching and learning, innovations, governance, output quality, student support and progression, institutional support, values and best practices, infrastructure, curriculum design, course and program outcomes. Accreditation can be institutional or of academic program specific. Institutional accreditation indicates that the institution as a whole has met the standards set by the accrediting body. Program accreditation applies to a particular program that is a part of an institution offering a specialized program.

The broad objectives of the accrediting and ranking bodies in India are to assure quality and to help users of these institutions understand their relative standing in the market. All these bodies focus on the quality as a yardstick which is refined from time to time in order to assure and maintain the standards of higher education.

Catering to the increasing demand for higher education, meeting the aspirations of young adults, dynamics of demand and supply for knowledge and skills in the market place - higher

education faces numerous challenges. In this context, NEP 2020 has identified the following as major problems currently faced by the higher education system (NEP 2020, 9.2, Page 33) -

- A severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem.
- Less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes.
- A rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of domains/study.
- Limited access particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with few HEIs that teach in local languages.
- Restricted teacher and institutional autonomy.
- Inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders.
- Lesser emphasis on research at most universities and college, and lack of competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines.
- Sub-optimal governance and leadership of HEIs.
- An ineffective regulatory system.
- Large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.

The policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energizing of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion.

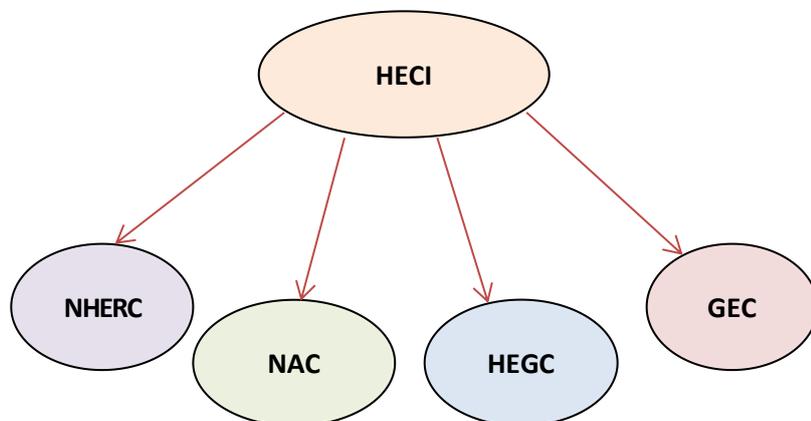
The policy's vision includes the following key changes to the current system (NEP 2020, 9.3 Page 34) -

- ✓ Moving towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction or programs in local/Indian languages.
- ✓ Moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education.
- ✓ Moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy.
- ✓ Revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and student support for enhanced student experiences.

- ✓ Reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service.
- ✓ Establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges.
- ✓ Governance of HEIs by highly qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy.
- ✓ “Light but tight” regulation by a single regulator for higher education.
- ✓ Increased access, equity and inclusion through a range of measures, including greater opportunities for outstanding public education; scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students; online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL); and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities.

Among the various aspects to be addressed as enumerated above, one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be established. Under HECI, four verticals with distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding and academic standard setting will be created -

- I. The first vertical will be the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). The NHERC will



**Figure 1.1 – Four Verticals of HECI**

regulate in a light but tight facilitative manner matters related to financial probity, good governance, full online and offline public disclosures of all finances, audit, procedures, infrastructure, faculty/staff, courses and educational outcome.

- II. The second vertical will be a meta-accrediting body called the National Accreditation Council (NAC). This will be the primary mechanism to enable regulation through accreditation.
- III. The third vertical will be the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), which will carry out funding and financing of higher education based on transparent criteria including the institutional development plans (IDPs) prepared by the institution and progress made on their implementation.
- IV. The fourth vertical will be General Education Council (GEC) which will frame expected learning outcomes of higher education programs, also referred to as ‘Graduate Attributes.’

## **1.2.ABOUT THE STUDY**

NEP 2020 envisages a structural change in the regulatory system of higher education and achieving regulation of higher education through accreditation. In this regard, Centre for Educational and Social Studies (CESS), Bengaluru in collaboration with the ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE), Hyderabad has conducted a study to understand the present assessment and accreditation system of HEIs vis-à-vis its functional requirement to be an enabler of regulation through accreditation.

## **1.3.CHAPTERIZATION**

The report is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter provides the context for the study. The second chapter gives an overview of Indian and International accreditation in higher education. Analysis of accredited institutions by NAAC, NBA and ranked by NIRF can be found in this chapter. The third chapter provides information on reforms proposed under NEP 2020 in accreditation. Fourth chapter deals with the research design for this study. The fifth chapter deals with SWOC analysis of accreditation systems in India and the issues in the present system. Sixth chapter provides data analysis and findings of the study. Seventh chapter is the culmination of entire study and provides action plan for strategically managing implementation of NEP 2020 for achieving regulation through accreditation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **AN OVERVIEW OF INDIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**



## **AN OVERVIEW OF INDIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Accreditation is a type of quality assurance process under which the services and operations of educational institutions are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met. The standards are generally defined by the accreditation body and if the standards are met by the institution, then the accreditation is granted. In most countries around the world the function of educational accreditation for Higher Education is conducted by government organizations, such as the Ministry of Education. In India, the important accrediting agencies are autonomous bodies under the Ministry of Education. Apart from this, a few private bodies, both national and international are in the fray.

### **2.1.PURPOSES OF ACCREDITATION**

Accreditation of HEI serves broadly following purposes:

- Certification of a HEI that it has met the prescribed standards.
- Help students and parents in identifying institutions of their choice which are accredited.
- Determine acceptability for transferring of credits to enable institutions achieve flexibility in program/course offerings.
- Guide public and private funding agencies in determining HEIs and programs for meaningful investments.
- Insulate HEIs against negative internal and external pressures.
- Set self-improvement goals for HEIs and stimulate aspirations for higher standards among HEIs in a competitive world.
- Enable inclusive institutional planning and evaluation by faculty and staff.
- Evolve and establish benchmarks for up-gradation of institutions, programs and courses and certification.

### **2.2.ACCREDITATION AND RANKING OF HEIs IN INDIA**

Accreditation and ranking are different forms of quality assurance mechanisms that are expected to enable a higher education system to maintain its quality. In India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) had been established in 1994 by the University Grants Commission (UGC). National Board of Accreditation (NBA) was established by AICTE to assess the qualitative competence of the programs offered by

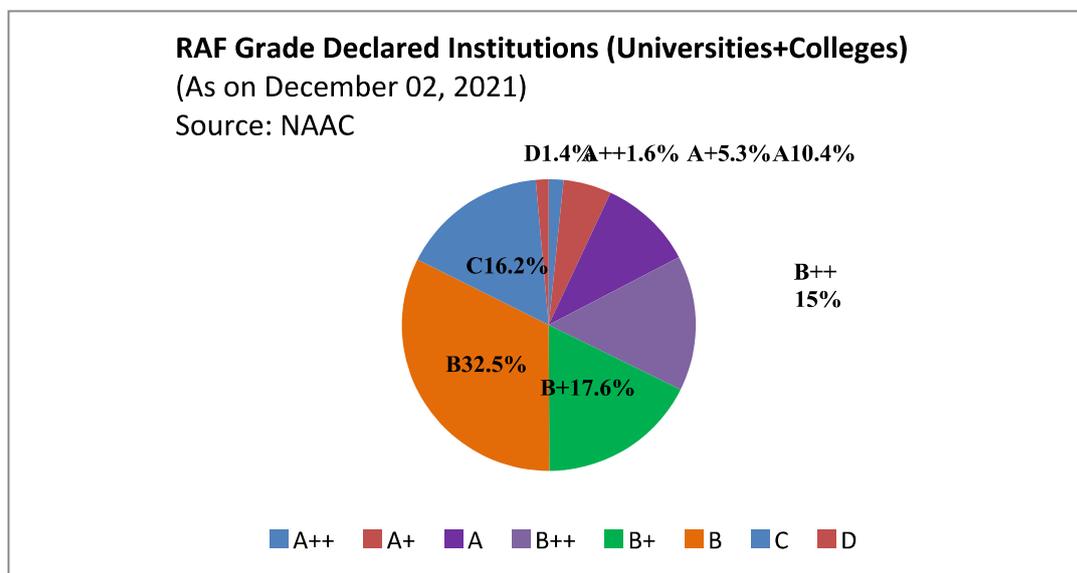
educational institution from diploma level to post-graduate level in engineering and technology, management, pharmacy, architecture and related disciplines, which are approved by the AICTE. To further strengthen the evaluation process, the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development in the year 2015 to rank the HEIs. The NIRF provides a process to rank the HEIs across the country.

In addition to accreditation by NAAC and NBA, a handful of institutions in the country particularly engineering/management have acquired accreditation from International agencies like ABET, IET, AACSB and EQUIS. The value addition gained by the respective institutions is to be appropriated in the revised framework to be developed after an in-depth study.

### 2.3.ANALYSIS OF ACCREDITATION AND RANKING IN INDIA

#### 2.3.1. Analysis of NAAC Accredited Institutions

According to the information provided on the UGC website, there are 1,019 universities as on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021, 832 autonomous colleges as on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and 12,887 colleges as on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021 under 2(f)/12(B) in India. Out of which 137 universities and 2110 colleges (including Stand-Alone Institutions) have been accredited by NAAC as on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 under the Revised Accreditation Framework (RAF).



**Figure 2.1: RAF Grade Declared Institutions (Universities + Colleges)**

From the above pie chart, it can be deduced that amongst the RAF mode of accreditation effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 (includes all cycles), the percentage of universities accredited is 6% (137 universities) and remaining 94% (2110) of them are colleges. Taking into account

the total number of universities (1,019 – AISHE Report), the percentage of valid accreditation of universities is only 13.4%. Considering the total number of colleges as 42,343 (as per AISHE 2019-20) and excluding approximately 10% as not meeting the eligibility requirement of NAAC (2 batches of students passed out) the percentage will be 5.5%. It may be noted that many of the institutions may have completed the validity period of accreditation and may be engaged in the process of acquiring subsequent cycles of accreditation.

### Grading pattern of Universities

From the figure 2.2, that indicates the university grades, it can be observed that the A (A++, A+, A) level, accounts for nearly 40%, B level (B++, B+, B) accounts for 49.6%, and the remaining are in C & D levels.

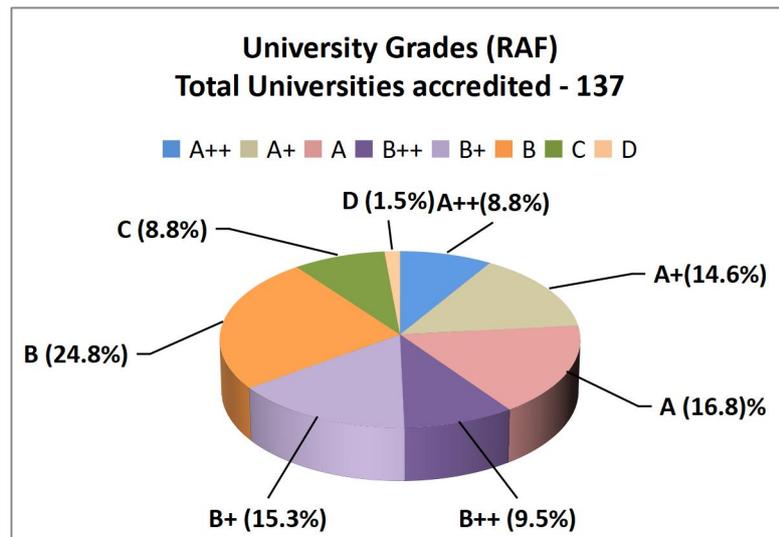


Figure 2.2: RAF Grade Declared Institutions – Universities

### Grading pattern of Colleges

From the figure 2.3, showing the grading pattern of colleges, it can be seen that A level (A++, A+, A) accounts for about 16%, B level (B++, B+, B) accounts for 66% and the rest are in C & D levels.

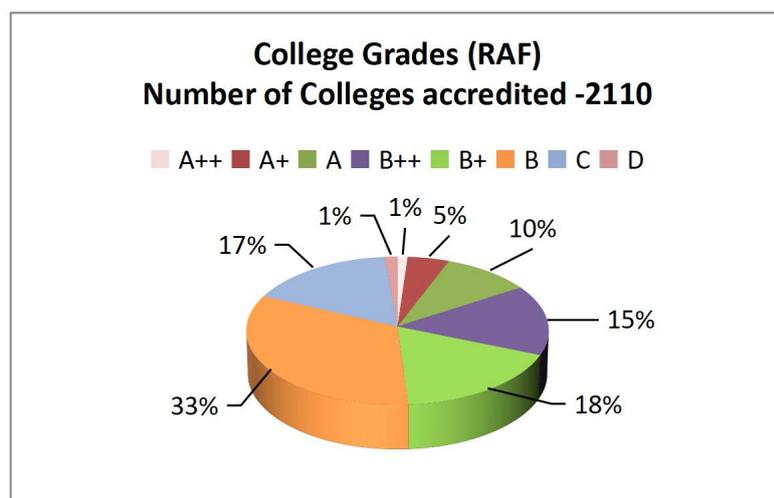


Figure 2.3: RAF Grade Declared Institutions - Colleges

## **Observations:**

- It can be observed from the above figures that a large number of institutions particularly colleges have not undergone even a single cycle of accreditation. When one compares the university grades vs. college grades, it is evident that more universities are in 'A' level of grading as compared to colleges in 'A' level. This aspect needs further analysis.
- The grading pattern has an arithmetic limitation due to its structure of measurement which will need review.

## **State-wise Institutional accreditation**

Analysis of state-wise data (RAF as on December 02, 2021; NAAC ) indicates that Tamil Nadu records the maximum percentage of universities accredited at 13.1 per cent followed by Rajasthan (11.7 percent) and Karnataka (8.8 percent), and states like Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Mizoram, Sikkim etc., are some among the states where only 1 University is accredited under the RAF. It may also be noted that states like Goa and Nagaland depict zero per cent accreditation under the RAF. Many other universities in the respective states may enter the RAF after their present cycle of accreditation, or many may be in the process of acquiring fresh accreditation.

In case of colleges, the highest percentage of accredited colleges is from Maharashtra at 33.4 percent followed by Karnataka at 10.4 percent and Tamil Nadu at 9.5 percent. It may be noted that these figures keep changing as and when the accreditation status changes.

### **2.3.2. Analysis of NBA Accredited Institutions**

NBA assesses the qualitative competence of the programs offered by educational institutions from diploma level to post-graduate level in engineering and technology, management, pharmacy, architecture and related disciplines, which are approved by AICTE. The induction of India in the Washington Accord in 2014 with the permanent signatory status of The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is a big leap forward for the higher-education system in India. It means that an engineering graduate from India can be employed in any one of the countries who have signed the accord. For Indian engineering institutions to get accredited by NBA according to the pacts of the accord, it is compulsory that engineering institutions follow the Outcome Based Education (OBE) model. Outcome based accreditation (OBA)

provides assurance that a college or university program meets the quality standards of the profession for which that program prepares its graduates.

NBA has accredited 10,374 programs such as UG & PG Engineering, MBA, MCA, Architecture and others in the list. A maximum of 7,226 engineering programs at Tier 1 and Tier 2 system have been accredited by NBA so far. (Data Retrieved on December 5, 2021). It is to be noted that the NAAC accords accreditation to the HEI as a whole, while NBA accords accreditation to the programs offered by HEIs.

### **2.3.3. Analysis of NIRF Ranked Institutions**

From the analysis of the University Ranking List 2021, in the top hundred, it may be noted that deemed to be universities and central universities account for 53 percent. Only 38 state universities make it to the list of top 100 which is less than 9 per cent of total state universities. Private/Private State universities account for less than 3 per cent of the total private universities. It may be noted that the number of deemed to be universities is 126, Central Universities is 54, whereas the State Universities stand at 442 and Private Universities number pegs at 397 as on 22 November 2021 (UGC data).

Further analysis shows that 41 per cent of the top 100 universities in NIRF ranking are from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka. 15 States and 2 Union Territories account for single digit representation in the top 100 ranks. Among the 100 ranked universities except for 6 institutions, all others have gone through NAAC accreditation at least once and 48 universities have valid accreditation as on date. The other universities may be in the process of getting re-accreditation in different cycles as applicable.

As far as colleges are concerned, autonomous colleges account for 50 per cent in the top hundred ranks and constituent colleges largely under University of Delhi constitute 19 per cent. The rest are affiliated colleges.

Majority of the autonomous colleges are from Tamil Nadu (27 out of 100) and Kerala (10 out of 100). The other States represented in the top 100 (includes all categories of institutions) are from Delhi, West Bengal, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana, Telangana and Union Territories of Pondicherry and Chandigarh. It is also observed that large number of ranked institutions have been accredited by NAAC (retrieved from NAAC website on 3-4 December, 2021) at least once and have largely secured A level grades (A, A+

and A++). As per NAAC website many of the colleges have completed their validity period of accreditation and may be in the process of re-accreditation.

Looking at the accreditation and ranking of universities it is obvious that it throws out a skewed pattern across the country and hence the gains from the process are not uniform.

Other important observations with respect to ranking and accreditation are as follows:

#### **University:**

- A Deemed-to-be University in Andhra Pradesh has the following credentials;
  - NIRF 2021 - University Ranking- 35, Engineering Ranking – 50, Management Ranking – 38
  - NIRF 2020 - University Ranking – 41, Engineering Ranking – 58, Management Ranking – 70
  - NAAC Grade- A++ with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.57, valid up to November 2023).

Note: In case of ranking, university ranking differs from engineering and management ranking and also on a yearly basis)

- A Central University has the following credentials
  - NIRF 2020 – 11;
  - NIRF 2021 – 12;
  - NAAC grading – A+ with a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.28, valid up to November 2023).

#### **Colleges:**

- It can also be observed that the hierarchy of ranking of colleges in NIRF need not necessarily reflect the hierarchy of scoring in NAAC grading. Example: An A grade college may be at the higher end of NIRF ranking and A+ college lower to that.

#### **2.4. NAAC ACCREDITATION PROCESS:VALUE ADDITION**

Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC): The concept of IQAC was perceived by NAAC right from its inception to be established in every institution after its first cycle of accreditation. The concept behind the initiative was to internalize and institutionalize quality

through the IQAC. Among its many functions, the most important aspect is the preparation and submission of Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) to NAAC on yearly basis.

Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR): As envisaged by NAAC, is a yearly report, which should be submitted to NAAC every year by all the Accredited Institutions as per the format prescribed online. There is an absence of any evaluation framework of institutional AQAR and technical provision for its seamless integration with that of the NAAC SSR framework.

## **2.5. ACCREDITATION: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

For Indian higher education, perhaps this is a time of disruptive innovations. The NEP 2020 would have profound impact both domestically and internationally. During this period of disruptive developments, it's imperative to gain perspectives on accreditation of higher education in the context of outside-in and inside-out dimensions of internationalization. The nature of laws of HEIs is the principles of scholarship and the scientific inquiry, where mind is the instrument for action. The objectives of higher education are understanding or knowing more of, what is true, or good, or beautiful, or wise (Wilson, 1971). In today's context, education provides opportunities for professional development and a means for upward social and economic mobility. Given its young population in India, HEIs should leverage quality education and their expertise in imparting knowledge, skills and to be the source of talent for global market.

### **2.5.1. NEP 2020 AND INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HEIS**

NEP 2020 envisages India as “a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby helping to restore its role as a Vishwa Guru. .... Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated, and relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries will be signed. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g. those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India” (NEP 2020, 12.8, Page 39). Thus the vision is that Indian HEIs should aspire to internationalize and work towards its achievement.

As the implementation of NEP 2020 gathers momentum, and as the HEIs from India make efforts to internationalize their offerings and foreign HEIs prepare to enter the Indian market, the need for accreditation of HEIs entering India and Indian HEIs setting up offshore

campuses too will have to gain momentum. Hence policy on accreditation as a means of regulation should address this emerging and important requirement. Need for accreditation services are bound to emerge in the international market to assure quality matching the best HEIs globally, if not better than those best standards. Hence as India architects the accreditation system under NAC for meeting the acceptable standards domestically, she must also plug-in international requirements in the Policy framework.

### **2.5.2. INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES IN ACCREDITATION**

Globally it is identified that accreditation has desired impact on HEIs, if it is on a voluntary compliance mode. This is manifested in the US and the Europe. At least in the US, the accreditation dates back to 1787 when the University of the State of New York formally established an accrediting agency (Harclerod, 1980), although the formalization of the accreditation agencies evolved between 1885 and 1895 due to increase in student enrolments. The US approach to accreditation is based on predefined standards for program and institutional accreditation. Most of the countries follow this approach. The assurance and accreditation process in the US is independent of government. It is performed by private bodies specialized in evaluation process. The US Department of Education and Council for Higher Education and Accreditation (CHEA), a non-governmental organization recognizes eligible and reputed bodies to act as accreditation agencies. For example in the discipline of engineering and technology, Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), a non-profit and non-governmental accrediting agency is highly reputed. ABET accreditation assures that an Institution meets the quality standards of a program and prepares its students for practicing the profession.

In general essential standards of evaluation, accreditation and quality assurance of HEIs and HE programs have three important sections viz., internal quality assurance, external quality assurance and quality assurance agencies. Internal quality assurance standards enforce a policy for assurance at institution level to drive their strategy through right structure and appropriate quality interventions. This requires alignment of admission, progression, recognition and certification with the compliance of regulations in vogue. The external quality assurance addresses the effectiveness of internal quality assurance. It involves on site visits, evaluation, review and reporting on published criteria. Mechanism for grievance redressal provides for dealing with complaints and appeals. Quality assurance agencies are mandated to ensure implementation and achieving outcomes of quality assurance.

The accreditation systems of select few countries/regions are provided in *Table 1*.

**Table 2.1: Accreditation Systems of Select /Countries and Regions**

<b>Country/ Accreditation System</b>
<p><b>Australia</b></p> <p>The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), a new regulator, began operations in January 2012 in Australia. TEQSA is responsible for regulating higher education nationally. TEQSA employs a risk management approach to regulation underpinned by several instruments: the TEQSA Act, the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) and the Regulatory Risk Framework (RRF).</p>
<p><b>Columbia</b></p> <p>Similar to Indian system. Columbia has secured a strong support from the World Bank.</p>
<p><b>European Union</b></p> <p>It is aligned with the goals of Bologna Process. Quality Assurance of Bologna Process is the Qualifications Framework. It recommends reviews to be cyclical after every five years. Documents are open for public scrutiny. EU authorized European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) to develop set of standards, procedures and guidelines. ENQA in association with the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) and the European Commission considers the interests of (a) students, (b) employers, (c) the society to receive good quality higher education and (d) the responsibility of the governments and institutions as critical factors for quality assurance in higher education.</p>
<p><b>Iran</b></p> <p>Assessing and evaluating quality began in 1996. Starts with self-evaluation of the departments on a pilot mode and then scaling up to the institutional level.</p>
<p><b>Japan</b></p> <p>Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) is a voluntary organization of higher education institutions. It is a certified organization by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to carry out quality assurance and third-party accreditation and evaluation.</p>
<p><b>New Zealand</b></p> <p>Two bodies are responsible for higher education in New Zealand. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA, 2012) is responsible for the quality assurance of non-</p>

**Table 2.1: Accreditation Systems of Select /Countries and Regions**

Country/ Accreditation System
<p>university tertiary education providers including polytechnics and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). NZQA also administers the National Certificates of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and the New Zealand Scholarship for secondary students. The Committee on University Academic Programs (CUAP) of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee (NZVCC) is responsible for quality assurance with regard to universities.</p>
<p><b>United Kingdom</b></p> <p>The accreditation of engineering and technology programmes is done by Institution of Engineering and Technology licensed by Engineering Council. It is guided by the Washington and Sydney accords and governed by the International Engineering Alliance (IEA).</p>

The following (*Table 2.2*) provides a comparative chart of reputed international accrediting agencies.

**Table 2.2: Comparative Chart of Reputed International Accrediting Agencies vis-à-vis NBA**

#	Accreditation Agency	Input/ Resources	Process Management	Assessment/ Evaluation	Outcomes
1.	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Program educational objectives</li> <li>• Faculty</li> <li>• Facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous Improvement</li> <li>• Institutional Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance evaluation of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Outcomes</li> </ul>
2.	Association for engineering Education of Russia (AEER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program educational objectives</li> <li>• Faculty</li> <li>• Program resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program content</li> <li>• Educational process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examination System</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional qualification</li> <li>• Graduates</li> </ul>
3.	Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching &amp;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> </ul>

**Table 2.2: Comparative Chart of Reputed International Accrediting Agencies vis-à-vis NBA**

#	Accreditation Agency	Input/ Resources	Process Management	Assessment/ Evaluation	Outcomes
	Council, United Kingdom (ENGC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical and material resources</li> <li>Entry to the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning Process</li> <li>Internal regulations &amp; progression</li> <li>Implementation of previous accreditation recommendations and requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strategies</li> <li>Professional registration of staff</li> <li>Quality assurance arrangement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outcomes of the program</li> </ul>
4.	Engineers Ireland (EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buildings, Laboratories and Equipment</li> <li>Academic staff</li> <li>Support staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of Student performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program outcomes</li> </ul>
5.	The National Board of Accreditation (NBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Educational Objectives and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mission and Vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students' Performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Outcomes</li> </ul>

### 2.5.3. Ranking of HEIs

Ranking of the Universities is also gaining prominence, with National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) taking the center stage in India since 2015 and the first ranking report was released in the year 2016 by NIRF. Global university rankings became prominent in the year 2003 with the Chinese Academic Ranking of World Universities aimed at benchmarking universities in China against top universities across the globe. Globalization of education,

mobility of students and faculty members, increased market penetration for HE and technological developments pre- and post-COVID 2019 pushed the frontiers of global ranking for HEIs. Ranking agencies apply research-based criteria for which data is available, whereas quality assurance focuses on teaching and learning which requires data collection through self-assessment report submitted by the HEI, evaluated by an external assessment agency that constitutes peer review team and then the assessment report is published.

Further, it could be also noted that the Times Higher Education (THE) and QS World University Rankings portfolio have grown to become the world’s most popular sources of comparative data about university performance worldwide.

The following (*Table 2.3*) provides a Comparative Chart of International Accreditation and International Ranking –

**Table 2.3: Comparison of International Accreditation and International Ranking**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>International Accreditation</b>	<b>International Rankings</b>
Goal	Continuous Phased Improvement	Branding, Admissions
Participation	Voluntary, Beneficial	Commercial compulsions
Scope/coverage	Academic Programs/Institutions	Academic Programs / Institutions
Periodicity	Every 3, 5, 7 or 10 years	Annually
Organizers	Colleagues (expert evaluation)	Business structures far from education
Procedure	Self-assessment, campus visits, performance review and monitoring, approval	Questionnaires, phone calls, use of quality assessment substitutes from third parties
Time required	High	Low
Differences	Concerned with university mission and educational process	Independent of University mission and educational process.
The foundation	Evidence based	Perception-based and partly evidence-based

The structure of accreditation in India that has been in existence since 1994 needs restructuring for meeting the future challenges of HE, particularly in the aspect of looking at accreditation also as part of regulatory function. Further studies are required to see whether any country is using accreditation for regulatory purposes. In the United States an indirect

form of regulation is in vogue where scholarships are available to students who opt for higher education in accredited institutions.

Global higher education and research are poised for paradigm changes – disruptive and unpredictable – on the back of technological advancements and adapting to changes in the post-pandemic context caused by the Novel Corona virus. It is obvious that the HEIs are facing a tough and challenging times. Strategically those who internationalize would survive and thrive. Hence there is a need for integrating and updating the accreditation with that of the globalized accreditation practices.





**CHAPTER 3**

**ACCREDITATION REFORMS  
UNDER NEP 2020**



## ACCREDITATION REFORMS UNDER NEP 2020

To accomplish its core mandate of transforming India into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing *high-quality education to all*, the NEP 2020 recommends transforming the existing regulatory system of Higher Education. With the implementation of NEP 2020, the higher education regulatory system would witness a paradigm shift through setting up of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) and its four verticals- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC); the National Accreditation Council (NAC); the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) and the General Education Council (GEC). The HECI as the apex Regulatory authority is mandated to ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting are performed by the distinct, independent, and empowered councils.

The Policy recommends making accreditation as the primary mechanism to enable ‘light but tight’ regulatory reforms which predominantly include financial probity, good governance, self-disclosure of financial audits, infrastructure and educational outcomes. Accreditation will thus be used to determine the adherence of an institution to the set regulations and thereby granting of autonomy. The following (*Table 3.1*) excerpts from NEP 2020 bring forth the renewed scope of accreditation as an important regulatory mechanism for HEIs as its implementation gains momentum:

<b>Table 3.1: Provisions in NEP 2020</b>	
<b>Chapter 10 Institutional Restructuring and Consolidation</b>	
1.	A stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation, will be established. Colleges will be encouraged, mentored, supported, and incentivized to gradually attain the minimum benchmarks required for each level of accreditation. With appropriate accreditations, Autonomous degree-granting Colleges could evolve into Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities, if they so aspire. ( <i>Para 10.4</i> )
2.	HEIs will have the autonomy and freedom to move gradually from one category to another, based on their plans, actions, and effectiveness. The most salient marker for these categories of institutions will be the focus of their goals and work. The Accreditation System will develop and use appropriately different and relevant norms across this range of HEIs. ( <i>Para 10.5</i> )
3.	There will be a fair and transparent system for determining increased levels of public

funding support for public HEIs. This system will give an equitable opportunity for all public institutions to grow and develop, and will be based on transparent, pre-announced criteria from within the accreditation norms of the Accreditation System (Para 10.9)

4. Institutions will have the option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, provided they are accredited to do so, in order to enhance their offerings, improve access, increase GER, and provide opportunities for lifelong learning (SDG 4). Top institutions accredited for ODL will be encouraged and supported to develop high-quality online courses (Para 10.10)
5. Single-stream HEIs will be phased out over time, and all will move towards becoming vibrant multidisciplinary institutions or parts of vibrant multidisciplinary HEI clusters, in order to enable and encourage high-quality multidisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching and research across fields. Through the attainment of suitable accreditations, all HEIs will gradually move towards full autonomy - academic and administrative - in order to enable this vibrant culture. (*Para 10.11*)
6. The new regulatory system envisioned by this Policy will foster this overall culture of empowerment and autonomy to innovate, including by gradually phasing out the system of ‘affiliated colleges’ over a period of fifteen years through a system of graded autonomy, and to be carried out in a challenge mode. Each existing affiliating university will be responsible for mentoring its affiliated colleges so that they can develop their capabilities and achieve minimum benchmarks in academic and curricular matters; teaching and assessment; governance reforms; financial robustness; and administrative efficiency. All colleges currently affiliated to a university shall attain the required benchmarks over time to secure the prescribed accreditation benchmarks and eventually become autonomous degree-granting colleges. This will be achieved through a concerted national effort including suitable mentoring and governmental support for the same (*Para 10.12*).

### ***Chapter 12: Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students***

7. ODL programmes will aim to be equivalent to the highest quality in-class programmes available. Norms, standards, and guidelines for systemic development, regulation, and accreditation of ODL will be prepared, and a framework for quality of ODL that will be recommendatory for all HEIs will be developed (Para 12.5).
8. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100

universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India. Furthermore, research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts (Para 12.8).

### ***Chapter 18: Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education***

9. The regulatory system of higher education will ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting will be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies. This is considered essential to create checks-and-balances in the system, minimize conflicts of interest, and eliminate concentrations of power. To ensure that the four institutional structures carrying out these four essential functions work independently yet at the same time and work in synergy towards common goals. These four structures will be set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) (Para 18.2).
10. The primary mechanism to enable such regulation will be accreditation. The second vertical of HECI will, therefore, be a ‘meta-accrediting body’, called the National Accreditation Council (NAC). Accreditation of institutions will be based primarily on basic norms, public self-disclosure, good governance, and outcomes, and it will be carried out by an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions supervised and overseen by NAC. The task to function as a recognized accreditor shall be awarded to an appropriate number of institutions by NAC. In the short term, a robust system of graded accreditation shall be established, which will specify phased benchmarks for all HEIs to achieve set levels of quality, self-governance, and autonomy. In turn, all HEIs will aim, through their Institutional Development Plans (IDPs), to attain the highest level of accreditation over the next 15 years, and thereby eventually aim to function as self-governing degree-granting institutions/clusters. In the long run, accreditation will become a binary process, as per the extant global practice (Para 18.3)
11. The functioning of all the independent verticals for Regulation (NHERC), Accreditation (NAC), Funding (HEGC), and Academic Standard Setting (GEC) and the overarching autonomous umbrella body (HECI) itself will be based on transparent public disclosure, and use technology extensively to reduce human interface to ensure efficiency and

transparency in their work. The underlying principle will be that of a faceless and transparent regulatory intervention using technology. Strict compliance measures with stringent action, including penalties for false disclosure of mandated information, will be ensured so that Higher Education Institutions are conforming to the basic minimum norms and standards (Para 18.10).

12. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education. This will be a key priority of the regulatory system. All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a 'not for profit' entity. Surpluses, if any, will be reinvested in the educational sector. There will be transparent public disclosure of all these financial matters with recourse to grievance-handling mechanisms to the general public. The accreditation system developed by NAC will provide a complementary check on this system, and NHERC will consider this as one of the key dimensions of its regulatory objective (Para 18.12).
13. Private HEIs having a philanthropic and public-spirited intent will be encouraged through a progressive regime of fees determination. Transparent mechanisms for fixing of fees with an upper limit, for different types of institutions depending on their accreditation, will be developed so that individual institutions are not adversely affected (Para 18.14).

#### ***Chapter 19: Effective Governance and Leadership for Higher Education Institutions***

14. Through a suitable system of graded accreditation and graded autonomy, and in a phased manner over a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence. Measures will be taken at all HEIs to ensure leadership of the highest quality and promote an institutional culture of excellence. Upon receiving the appropriate graded accreditations that deem the institution ready for such a move, a Board of Governors (BoG) shall be established consisting of a group of highly qualified, competent, and dedicated individuals having proven capabilities and a strong sense of commitment to the institution (Para 19.2)

Based on the above recommendations of NEP, a meta-accrediting body called National Accrediting Council (NAC) will be set up which will use Accreditation as a process to facilitate/ to ensure:

- Strict adherence to higher education regulations by every HEI;

- Phasing out affiliated college system through gradual transformation into autonomous degree-granting colleges over a period of 15 years;
- Mobility of institutions from one type to another (from Autonomous college to Teaching intensive or Research intensive university) through appropriate accreditation norms;
- Appropriate funding of the public HEIs;
- Institutions to offer ODL and online programs;
- Potential Indian HEIs to set campuses overseas;
- Prevention of commercialization of higher education.

The fundamental function of the existing assessment and accreditation systems are to assess institutions and/or the programs offered by them to evaluate whether the institution is offering quality education and whether it has certain prescribed infrastructure in place. The current process of assessment and accreditation is largely voluntary as far as agencies are concerned, but the accreditation status by HEIs is required for developmental activities.





**CHAPTER 4**

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

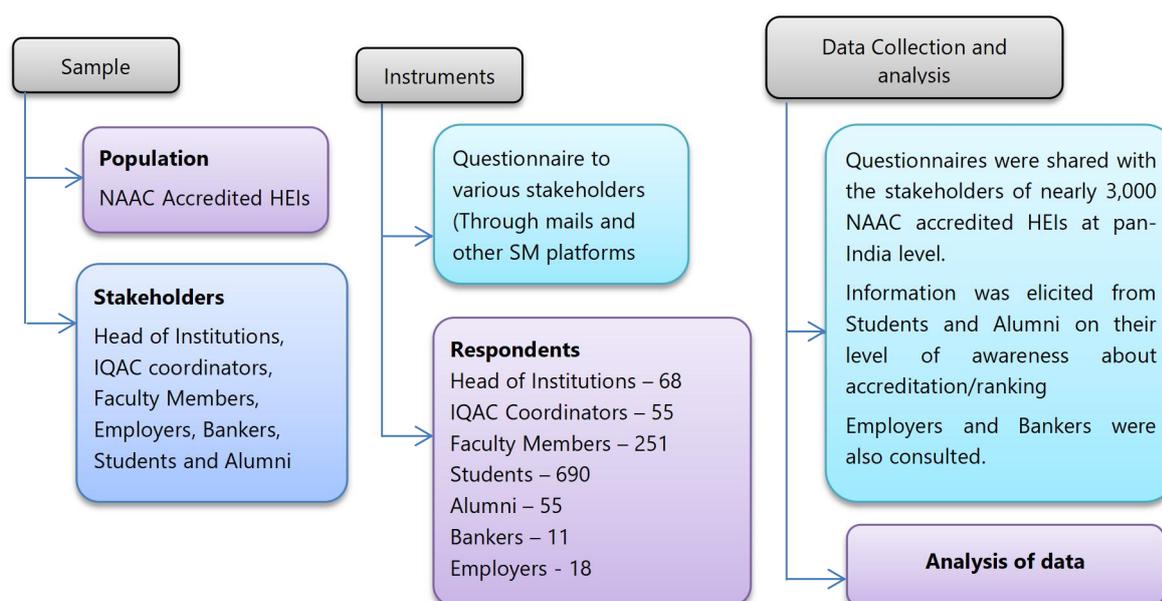


## RESEARCH DESIGN

### 4.1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Accreditation of HEIs has been in practice in India for more than two and a half decades. NAAC and NBA (initially part of AICTE) have been performing the assessment and accreditation functions at present. Further, NIRF was launched in September 2015 which provides annual ranking of HEIs. NEP 2020 has envisaged accreditation as a means of regulation for HEIs.

The focus of this study is to make recommendations on accreditation as a means for regulation of HEIs as envisaged in NEP 2020. Accordingly, the team identified various components of the present accreditation system and various government bodies involved in accreditation and ranking with their objectives. Based on the insights gained thereof, the following research framework has been used for the study.



**Figure 4.1: Research Framework**

The primary intent of this report is to help the stakeholders, including the government, to make evidence-based interventions to strengthen the accreditation system, provide an opportunity to various stakeholders in understanding accreditation and also the challenges involved in transforming the current accreditation system as a means for regulation of HEIs in line with the NEP 2020 provisions.

## **4.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The primary objective of the study is to explore the existing accreditation and assessment system and frameworks for HEIs in relation to the recommendations of the NEP 2020 from the perspective of enabling accreditation for regulation of HEIs.

Keeping the above in perspective, following objectives are framed:

1. SWOC analysis of existing assessment systems/frameworks.
2. Identify various components of the present assessment systems/frameworks for similarities and differences.
3. Identify the gaps in the existing assessment systems/frameworks vis-à-vis desired goals of NEP 2020.
4. Identify aspects to be added to the assessment systems/frameworks for enabling it to capture the regulatory requirements implied or otherwise.
5. Analyze the perspectives of participants in the assessment process and end users of assessment outcomes through primary research.
6. Suggest action plan for achieving regulation through accreditation as envisaged in NEP 2020.
7. Identify dimensions which require further study/research to strengthen the assessment process.

## **4.3.METHODOLOGY**

Assessing the accreditation process that is in vogue and understanding the utility of accreditation outcomes from the users' perspective are important to plan future course of action. Accordingly, survey was conducted among the participants of the accreditation process and the end users of accreditation.

Key variables for the questionnaire were developed after brainstorming with the experts by the research team. Questionnaires were designed for collecting responses. Due to the current corona virus pandemic, questionnaires were administered online using Google Forms. During the period from March 05-31, 2021, questionnaires were sent to various stakeholders at pan-India level via email and social media to solicit their responses. The questionnaires were shared with nearly 3,000 accredited HEIs (including universities and colleges) spread across the country covering around 15,000 respondents of HEIs on a random basis. The stakeholders

included Heads of Institutions, IQAC Coordinators, faculty members, alumni and students. Survey questionnaires were also sent to bankers and employers.

Responses received from Heads of institutions (70), Faculty Members (245), IQAC Coordinators (56), Students (690), Alumni (55), Employers (18) and Bankers (12) were coded using IBM SPSS 23. In addition to survey questionnaire, stakeholders were consulted over phone to seek clarifications. Since, the concept of regulation using accreditation is futuristic in nature and in the context of absence of sufficient experience in the field; experts with wide knowledge in the area of assessment and accreditation were also consulted.

The awareness about accreditation among the end users namely students, bankers and employers seem to be limited. Hence the outcome of their responses was not fulfilling or conclusive.

**Limitation of the study:** Due to the pandemic, one-to-one interactions were limited and the study had to restrict itself to the on-line interactions. Hence the promptness in speed and conclusive responses were affected.

#### **4.4. ASPECTS OF REGULATION ADDRESSED BY ACCREDITATION IN THE LAST FEW YEARS**

Accreditation is considered as one of the most significant and globally recognized means to ensure quality of the education system. Over the years in the country accreditation has been used for regulatory functions by the Ministry of Education and other regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, NCTE etc. Few of the regulatory aspects undertaken through accreditation are listed below. These are illustrative and not exhaustive.

- University Grants Commission (Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of higher Educational Institutions) Regulations 2012 were notified to make it mandatory for each Higher Education Institution to get accredited by the Accreditation Agency after passing out of two batches of students or completion of six years after the inception of the institution, whichever is earlier. UGC has also set an ambitious target for itself that institutions should get accredited with a minimum score of 2.5 by the year 2022. UGC has also come up with initiatives such as “Paramarsh” to mentor non-accredited institutions.
- UGC recognizes that autonomy is pivotal to promoting and institutionalizing excellence in higher education and that the regulatory framework needs to facilitate better

performing institutions towards excellence in higher education. Accreditation has become a prerequisite for attaining autonomy.

- Accreditation is a pre-requisite for funding under Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Ministry of Education.
- Validity of accreditation is extended by NAAC based on consecutive good performance by institutions (maintaining pre-prescribed level of grades).
- UGC came up with the revised regulations for offering Online and ODL programs in 2020 (“UGC Online and ODL Regulations”) under which courses governed by statutory bodies could be offered in Online and ODL mode only after approval of such statutory body. Following this, AICTE has published guidelines paving the way for Online and ODL programs with appropriate regulations. (Accredited by NAAC with a score of 3.01 on a 4 point scale or Top 100 among NIRF University ranking)
- Accreditation is permitted as a basis for variable fee structure by colleges in some states.
- Accreditation is pre-requisite for extension of affiliation to B.Ed. courses (University of Jammu).
- Accreditation is the basis for launching new courses (AICTE).
- Accreditation is pre-requisite for enhancement of seats (NCTE).
- Institutions having a certain NAAC grade or NIRF ranking are allowed to offer FDPs under ATAL Academy (AICTE).

Thus, accreditation is already being used for differentiating the autonomy enjoyed by the institutions.

The interventions mentioned above are indicative and not exhaustive. Also, some of the schemes may not be in vogue.



## **CHAPTER 5**

# **ANALYSIS OF ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS IN INDIA**



## **ANALYSIS OF ACCREDITATION SYSTEM IN INDIA**

### **5.1. SWOC ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT ACCREDITATION SYSTEM**

Some aspects of accreditation have been directly or indirectly used in regulatory function by government/statutory bodies/universities in the past. But regulatory mechanism, as an attribute of assessment and accreditation is a new concept and has not been tried before in India. Hence it is prudent to understand the strengths, weakness, opportunities and challenges of accreditation systems in India at the very outset.

#### **Strengths**

1. Hitherto NAAC (accrediting institutions) and NBA (accrediting programs) are the only accrediting agencies in India.
2. Accreditation has some impact on improving the quality of higher education.
3. Serves as a benchmarking tool to improve the quality of education by analyzing best practices of other HEIs or organizations to evolve standards of performance.
4. Instills a momentum of quality consciousness among the HEIs aiming for continuous improvements.
5. Portrays institutional uniqueness.
6. Improves the team work culture with the willingness of staff/faculty to undertake quality improvement activities.
7. Though the accreditation processes of NAAC and NBA vary the underlying philosophy i.e. quality education remains the same.
8. Regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, NCTE, DCI, etc. use accreditation status/grade for granting funds/facilities.

#### **Weakness**

1. Lack of flexibility in admitting International standards as the review process is solely designed for Indian quality standards.
2. Limited flexibility in introducing innovative techniques by the institutions, as they are bound to implement rules and regulations of multiple authorities.
3. ‘One size fits all’ notion where similar set of criteria and indicators are used for all the institutions aspiring accreditation.

4. Maintaining quality is a continuous process. A short span visit by the peer team members makes them depend on the information provided by the institutional authorities which can be misleading.
5. Possible misrepresentation of quantitative data in SSR.
6. Lack of transparency in the data provided by the institutions.
7. Transparency issues have been a concern in the evaluation process

### **Opportunities**

1. The strengths and shortcomings of the HEIs can be identified and appropriate/necessary interventions can be implemented.
2. Promotes determining and maintaining standards of teaching, evaluation and research in HEIs
3. Accelerates and nurtures global competencies among students.
4. Inculcates ethics and value systems among students.
5. The stakeholders such as the government, students, parents and employers benefit from information and analysis of institutional performance to make informed decisions.

### **Challenges**

1. Institutions may adopt opportunistic behaviors aimed at merely attaining accreditation.
2. Multiplicity of accrediting, ranking and approving bodies leads to interference of many of committees in the HEI making the functioning and compliance cumbersome.
3. Experts may be biased sometimes and is reflected in the reports.
4. Regulatory requirements from accreditation agencies may generate significant workload in terms of administrative tasks, and compliance with these requirements often results in time consuming documentation and audit activities in the HEIs.
5. The accreditation process is more data driven and cannot accurately assess quality of education offered.
6. Need to develop well defined and meaningful accreditation procedures for online and ODL programs without which the goal of GER as envisaged in NEP 2020 cannot be achieved.

7. Preference of HEIs in India for International accreditation to attract students and faculty from global markets.
8. Accreditation cycle of five years and more, does not ensure everything is in a systematic flow during the intervening period of two cycles. Even though AQAR is meant for continuous reflection by the institution, there are many instances where it has not been submitted on time every year, and bulk submission is also seen in spite of measures being taken to streamline the process over the years.
9. More than two decades of accreditation did not promote quality of education to global standards to showcase even a single Indian university in the top 100 global universities. It is a subject matter of debate whether it is a challenge to the accreditation system or not.
10. Lack of systems and procedures for accrediting emerging multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary/trans-disciplinary universities.

## 5.2. ISSUES IN THE PRESENT ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

The following (Table 5.2) presents the issues in the present accreditation system –

**Table 5.2: Issues in the Present Accreditation System**

<b><i>Multiplicity of Regulatory/Ranking Bodies</i></b>
There are multiple regulatory bodies in higher education viz., UGC (to maintain standards and funds); BCI, MCI, DCI, AICTE, PCI, NCTE, DEC, etc. (for standards and approvals); NAAC, NBA (for accreditation) and NIRF (for ranking). The objectives and approaches of these bodies are different. This multiplicity of bodies leads to inconsistencies in their processes, assessment criteria, methodologies, documentation requirements, etc. resulting in additional demands on HEIs in terms of time, effort, expenses and human resources. Multiplicity of accrediting, ranking and approving bodies leads to interference of many regulators/entities in the HEI making the functioning and compliance cumbersome.
<b><i>No Indian university in Global Top 100 Universities</i></b>
Though excellence in education is the common goal of the existing accrediting and ranking bodies, there is a lack of defined structure. Consequently the existing regulatory system has not helped the country achieve ranks in the top 100 universities globally.
<b><i>No Time Bound Targets for HEIs</i></b>
Currently HEIs do not have time bound targets through Institutional Development Plans to achieve goals set in advance.

<b><i>HEIs to catch up with ICT in Higher Education</i></b>
Although usage of ICT has been recommended by the existing accrediting bodies, there is no evidence that HEIs are extensively using technology. This also results in lack of transparency in the data provided by HEIs.
<b><i>Transitional Challenges for HEIs to move from One Type of University to the Other</i></b>
The phased-mechanism to provide graded autonomy to HEIs, to move from one category to next category will be challenging for the existing system.
<b><i>Procedures for Assessing ODL and Online Programs Required</i></b>
The goal of GER as envisaged in NEP 2020 cannot be achieved without promoting ODL and Online programs. There are technologies that can promote these programs. However, there is a need to develop well defined and meaningful accreditation procedures for such programs.
<b><i>Lack of Accountability for Affiliated Colleges</i></b>
Currently affiliating universities exercise limited accountability in mentoring affiliated colleges particularly in the area of quality. This may be due to large number of colleges affiliated to a particular university.
<b><i>Sharing of Best Practices not Leveraged</i></b>
IIMs and IITs are considered as the epitome of quality education in India. Yet very countable numbers of Indian universities make it to the top global universities list. There is no framework and regulatory mechanism in place for sharing best practices and collaboration for promoting quality education.
<b><i>Monitoring of Quality of PhD Programs is Lacking</i></b>
Over a period of time, it may be noted that the number of PhD students have increased by leaps and bounds. As per the AISHE Report 2019-20, during the year 2015-16, 1,263,15 students got enrolled for PhD which now stands at 2,02,449 enrolments, with almost 60% increase in the number of enrolments and 38,986 students were awarded Ph.D. level degree during the year 2019.
Though the country has increased the number of PhDs in the recent past, but the quality of PhD produced remains a matter of debate. Thus, one may say that we have doctorates sans scholarship. There is an urgent need to address this issue. But, there is a wide gap in the quality of doctoral degrees provided in India and that of developed countries.

Thus there are limitations in the current assessment and accreditation systems in elevating the overall quality of higher education. Whether the current systems would be re-engineered to take on the expanded scope of accreditation as per the NEP 2020 or whether new system would replace the existing one is still unknown. In either case, the important elements/components of assessment and accreditation as per the stakeholders have been captured in this report through stakeholders' survey conducted across India.





## **CHAPTER 6**

# **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**



## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

One of the objectives of this research study is to understand the perspectives of participants about assessment and accreditation process besides the understanding of the outcomes by the end users of accreditation by collecting data through primary research. NEP 2020 envisages achieving regulation of HEIs through accreditation. The current accreditation carried out by NAAC and NBA does not cater to this requirement. Thus the accreditation process has to be aligned with the regulations in higher education to achieve the strategic goals of NEP 2020.

In this chapter, the study tries to explore three important dimensions of NEP 2020 – autonomy, assessment & accreditation, and awareness. These three dimensions play a significant role in shaping up the new and innovative approach of NEP 2020 towards regulation of HEIs through accreditation.

### 6.1. Autonomy

The word ‘autonomy’ appears 20 times in the NEP 2020. This emphasizes the importance given by the policy to institutional and teacher autonomy. The principles of NEP 2020 include “encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through **“autonomy, good governance and empowerment”** (page 5). The principles also include “a **‘light but tight’ oversight and regulatory system** to ensure **integrity** and **transparency** of the educational system (page 5). The policy provides for autonomy to teachers in aspects of pedagogy (5.14, page 20), autonomy to innovate and excel (9.4, page 31), academic and administrative autonomy (9.5, page 31), autonomy to move from one category of HEI to another, based on plans, actions and effectiveness (10.4, page 32), autonomy backed by adequate public financial support and stability (10.11, page 33) and foster the culture of empowerment and autonomy to innovate (10.12, page 33).

Referring to the regulation of HEIs the policy states –

*There will be one common regulatory regime for the entire higher education sector, eliminating duplication and disjunction of regulatory efforts. A single regulator, the **National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)** will be set up to regulate in a ‘light but tight’ and facilitative manner, meaning that a few important matters - particularly **financial probity, good governance, and full online and offline public disclosure of all finances, procedures, faculty/staff, courses, and educational outcomes** - will be very effectively regulated, while **leaving the rest to the judgment***

*of the HEIs, which is essential to institutional autonomy, innovation, and pursuit of excellence*(18.3. page 47).

Thus the scope of autonomy from NEP 2020 perspective is “financial autonomy, governance and public disclosures.” The regulations related to these aspects, which are demonstrative and not exhaustive, are provided in *Annexure IV*.

UNESCO defines “institutional autonomy” as “*a degree of self-governance, necessary for effective decision-making by institutes of higher education regarding their academic work standards, management and related activities*”. The Magna Carta Universitatum 2020 states “...intellectual and moral autonomy is the hallmark of any university and a precondition of its responsibilities to society.”

In India, the Kothari Commission first recommended autonomy in 1966 for colleges which demonstrated outstanding performance within a University. The National Education Policy 1986 suggested increasing the number of autonomous colleges. Honorable Supreme Court of India, invoking Article 19(1) (g) of the Constitution of India, delivered judgments which required providing new guidelines for autonomy of HEIs in the real sense.

In Indian context “a college will be fully autonomous only if it has its right to admit students, appoint teachers and employees, decide on course content, carry out teaching, conduct examinations to evaluate the performance of students and take all other steps to maintain high educational standards with only guidelines from the university and state government, but not remotely controlled by them.” Thus the focus of autonomy from the beginning has been through the lens of affiliated colleges attached to a University and very narrow in its approach by confining to the realm of academics. There are criticisms that in reality most of the colleges and universities do not enjoy autonomy to take their own decision.

Globally, in many countries even while the higher education community continues to echo the importance of autonomy, it is observed that autonomy has actually eroded in many countries. In this scenario, the Government of India through NEP 2020 has provided to promote institutional autonomy and faculty freedom in areas other than *financial probity, good governance, and full online and offline public disclosure of all finances, procedures, faculty/staff, courses, and educational outcomes*. This is indeed commendable and would pave the way for pursuit of excellence and innovation in HEIs.

While the policy is clear on the areas where HEIs would be regulated and may come up with consolidation of existing regulations or drafting of new regulations, it is desirable to leave the educational outcomes to the HEIs and fend for themselves in the market place.

To mention that institutional autonomy is at the heart of the success of the NEP 2020 may not be out of place. Autonomous institutions have performed better in accreditation/ranking. It is a pointer to the importance of autonomy (It may also be noted that in this report Universities are considered for all practical purposes as autonomous institutions).

Efforts over the years by the UGC to promote autonomy in colleges, has not yielded desired and uniform results. The presence of autonomous institutions (colleges) in the country is highly skewed with the state of Tamil Nadu accounting for the maximum number of autonomous institutions. Further it is important to understand that autonomy and accreditation have high degree of correlation. Accreditation has two aspects - the external and the internal. The internal aspect which deals with continuous quality improvement paradigm is a function of autonomy. Again mere grant of autonomy may not be good enough but it must also be supported by proactive institutional leadership.

Historical data shows that institutions which were awarded autonomy have relinquished the same for various reasons, out of which some may be genuine and many imagined. So if one wants to avoid the repetition of history, there is a need to prepare institutions to opt for autonomy out of free will. Autonomy needs leadership skills at various levels of functioning of an institution and it would be a paradigm shift from the top down approach, our higher education system is used to.

To cultivate leadership skills at various levels, one needs to have change of mindsets and concerted efforts to nurture skills by providing training including the ability to handle risks across the board. There is enough space for the Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) in the country to redefine its role with Administrative Staff Colleges of India, NUEPA etc., and take up this mammoth task of bringing in changes in the next decade through continuous training to the leaders in the higher education. Already LEAP programme under Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Scheme is initiated.

## **6.2. Accreditation and Quality/Regulation:**

Accreditation has a history of more than two hundred years in the US. It has made its presence felt in India in little more than two decades ago. Accreditation in India was

fraught with huge resistance initially, but made enormous strides in its progress and acceptability across HEIs subsequently. Today every Indian state and union territory boasts of accredited institutions. It can be legitimately claimed that before the pandemic set in, every day one or the other HEI was getting accredited or in the process of undergoing assessment for accreditation. Peer team members crisscrossing the country in large numbers to assess institutions was a phenomenon in itself.

But on a larger canvas, as of 2020, NAAC - the primary government supported accrediting agency in the country has completed accrediting only about 20% of the HEIs. This includes multiple cycles and with the assumption that about 5000 to 6000 institutions are not eligible for the process. Thus about 80% of eligible institutions are yet to undergo accreditation process, even once. Transparency and trust remain the areas of concern for large number of HEIs remaining outside accreditation process. The corner stone of NEP 2020 is accreditation to promote regulation and Government's approach is 'light but tight regulation.'

In this context it is important to understand the participants' perspective on accreditation and its contribution to quality of higher education and compliance with regulations.

### **6.3. Awareness**

Accreditation in higher education implies quality of education, quality of processes and better communication. Promoting accreditation will lead to increased awareness about quality of education among the users of accreditation outcomes. Prominent users of accreditation outcomes of HEIs are students, alumni, employers and education financiers or bankers. These key stakeholders must be aware of the accreditation status of higher education and project it for their advantage. Accreditation would then safeguard the society by bringing accountability to HEIs.

### **6.4. Participants' Perspective on Accreditation and Quality/Regulation (Responses)**

The perception of the participants on accreditation process is important for understanding indifference and apathy, if any towards the outcome of accreditation. This study collected primary data from participants in the accreditation process such as heads of the institution (68), coordinators of IQAC (55) and faculty members (251). The findings of data analysis are presented below:

#### 6.4.1. Heads of Institutions

Of the 68 participants, 26 (38%) had the experience of working as a peer team member. A good number of respondents, i.e., 48 members (71%) opined that efficient and effective functioning of the IQAC and its evaluation can itself be used as an indicator of continuous quality improvement/ regulation of the Institution. The analysis reveals that the improvement in quality/ regulation in an institution does not depend on the functioning of IQAC which is envisaged to promote internal quality<sup>1</sup>.

#### 6.4.2. IQAC Coordinators

Of the 55 respondents, 45 (82%) opined that the efficient and effective functioning of the IQAC and its evaluation can itself be used as an indicator of continuous quality improvement/regulation of the Institution. Based on the analysis of the data, there seems to be a positive correlation between quality improvement/regulation and efficient and effective functioning of the IQAC.

#### 6.4.3. Faculty Members

The study received 251 valid responses from the faculty respondents. A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between functioning of IQAC and the improvement in quality/regulation. There was a weak, positive correlation between the two variables<sup>2</sup>. However, the relationship was not significant.

From the above analysis, we can conclude that heads of the institution, IQAC Coordinators and faculty members perceive that there is a weak but positive correlation between functioning of IQAC and the improvement in quality/regulation. This emphatically points to the need to strengthen the IQAC to play an improved role in contributing to the quality of education and better regulatory compliance of HEIs.

**Discussion:** Further the immediate stakeholders of the assessment process have indicated in large numbers that the effective functioning of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell has a direct bearing on the continuous quality improvement systems of an institution. Field experiences and data have shown that universities and colleges which are accredited along with grades show a spread across grades and thereby implying differential quality of delivery of education. As grades are given based on past performance as per the present systems, it

---

<sup>1</sup>(p=.847) with Chi-Square statistic  $\chi^2=.037$ . A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between function of IQAC and the improvement in quality/regulation. There was a weak, positive correlation between the two variables,  $r=.083$ ,  $N=68$ . However, the relationship was not significant (p=.503)

<sup>2</sup> ( $r=.020$ ,  $N=251$ ), (p=.753).

may be worthwhile to consider the functioning of the IQAC as the core of the assessment process and restructure the exercise.

## **6.5. Users' Perspective on Quality/Regulation and IQAC**

The perception of users of accreditation process is important. This study collected primary data from users of accreditation outcomes such as students (690), employers (18), alumni (55) and bankers (11). The findings of data analysis are presented below:

### **6.5.1. Students**

#### **6.5.1.1. Awareness of accreditation before joining HEI**

- i) **College vs. University Students:** When asked whether the student was aware of the accreditation status of the HEI before joining 72.6% of college students and 27.4% of university students responded affirmatively<sup>3</sup>. While students were aware of accreditation status of college/university where they were seeking admission, they had weak negative connotation, although it is weak. One has to examine the possible reasons for this negative connotation associated with accreditation.
- ii) **Location of students:** It was found that 52% of female and 48% of male students were aware of the accreditation status of the HEIs prior to seeking admission. Computation of Pearson Chi-Square statistic showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the awareness levels among students on accreditation status of HEI before taking admission irrespective of their location viz., city, town or rural areas<sup>4</sup>.
- iii) **Gender of students:** Awareness on the accreditation of HEIs among the students taking admission was higher among male students (62%) compared to female students (50%)<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Computation of Pearson Chi-Square statistic to examine whether the students were aware of the accreditation status prior to taking admission was significant with  $\chi^2=6.061$  ( $p=.014$ ,  $n=690$ ). A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated significant weak negative correlation on students' awareness and accreditation status,  $r=-.094$ ,  $N=690$  ( $p=.014$ ). However, the relationship was not significant ( $p=.503$ ).

<sup>4</sup> ( $\chi^2=1.068$ ,  $n=690$ ,  $p=.586$ ). A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated significant weak negative correlation on students' awareness on accreditation status and their location,  $r=-.019$ ,  $N=690$ . However, the relationship was not significant ( $p=.614$ ). The weak negative correlation has to be understood by further examining the possible reasons for the same.

<sup>5</sup> Pearson Chi-Square statistic showed that the difference in awareness levels among male and female students was not significant ( $\chi^2=1.980$ ,  $n=690$ ,  $p=.108$ ). A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated weak negative correlation on students' awareness on accreditation status based on gender,  $r=-.054$ ,  $N=690$ . However, the relationship was not significant ( $p=.160$ ).

iv) **Level of Education:** Awareness on the accreditation of HEIs based on level of education was highest among UG students (55.4%), followed by PG (10.5%) and others (40%)<sup>6</sup>.

**Discussion:** It can be seen from the above analysis that availing of bank loans among students is not significant.

### 6.5.1.2. Availing of Educational Loans from Banks

#### i) College vs. University Students

Penetration of bank educational loans among students of higher education seems very low. Only 9% students from colleges and 14% of the students from university (overall 10.3%) have availed the loan facility as per the study. Pearson Chi-Square statistic showed that the students availing loan facility is statistically significant on the nature of the institution i.e. college vis-à-vis university<sup>7</sup>

#### ii) Location of students

An examination of educational loans availed by students based on their location revealed that 11% of student from cities, 4% from towns and 10% from rural areas have availed loans. However availing educational loans is statistically not significant meaning availing loan is not dependent on the location of the student<sup>8</sup>.

#### iii) Gender of students

9.5% of male students and 14% of female students have availed educational loan. Statistically availing loan for higher education is not dependent on the gender<sup>9</sup>

#### iv) Level of Education

Interestingly only 11% of UG, 10% of PG and 10% of students pursuing other higher education qualifications have availed bank loan facility. Analysis showed that availing loan is statistically not significant with the level of education<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Pearson Chi-Square statistic showed that the difference in awareness levels among PG, UG and other students was significant. ( $\chi^2=16.657$ ,  $n=690$ ,  $p=.001$ ). A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated weak negative correlation on students' awareness on accreditation status based on level of education,  $r=-.102$ ,  $N=690$ . The relationship was significant ( $p=.008$ ).

<sup>7</sup>  $\chi^2=3.375$  ( $p=.049$ ,  $n=690$ ).

<sup>8</sup> ( $\chi^2=4.374$ ,  $p=.112$ ,  $n=690$ ). Pearson correlation coefficient showed weak relationship between availing loans and the location of the students ( $r=.034$ ,  $N=690$ ,  $p=.373$ ). However the relationship is not statistically significant.

<sup>9</sup> ( $\chi^2=1.980$ ,  $p=.108$ ,  $n=690$ ). There is a weak negative correlation between availing loan and gender ( $r=-.054$ ,  $N=690$ ,  $p=.160$ ).

**Inference:** From the analysis it can be concluded that students' awareness of the accreditation is not significant (a) at a college or university level, (b) whether they are located in a city, town or rural area, (c) based on gender and the level of education they are pursuing i.e. UG, PG or other certification programs. The correlations, whether positive or negative, are weak and do not point to any significance in awareness levels.

The study focused on understanding the loan availing behavior of students. The results indicate that penetration of bank loans among students of higher education is low. This matter may be investigated further.

### **6.5.2. Alumni**

Of the 55 alumni, 36% (20) responded that in their job interview/selection process the present employer sought details of accreditation or ranking status of the institution. Seeking of the information on accreditation by the employers is not statistically significant ( $\chi^2=3.040$ ,  $N=55$ ,  $p=.219$ ). This is true across all levels of education viz., UG, PG and PhD. Employers do not give weightage to the accreditation status of the institution in their decision-making, although some of them may be seeking the information.

### **6.5.3. Employers**

The responses from employers are scant. Of the 18 who responded, 89% (16) stated that they seek information on accreditation status of the institution in their recruitment process. 72% (13) of the employers stated that they seek information on NIRF ranking of the institution in the recruitment process. Recruiters in private sector are more favorable to seeking the information on accreditation/ranking status of institution than in public sector.

### **6.5.4. Bankers**

The study received least responses from bankers. Of the 11 respondents, 90% (10) stated that they seek information on accreditation/ranking status of the institution. The finding shows that they seek information but don't attach value while sanctioning education loan.

---

<sup>10</sup> ( $\chi^2=0.073$ ,  $p=.964$ ,  $n=690$ ). Pearson correlation coefficient showed that there is a weak association between level of education and availing bank loan ( $r=.010$ ,  $N=690$ ,  $p=.797$ ).

## 6.6. Conclusion

- a) Awareness level among the end users of accreditation is not significant. While individual institutions may be promoting their educational programs using the achievements in their accreditation and ranking, overall awareness level is low.
- b) Among the users, accreditation is still not a significant factor for decision making among students, bankers and recruiters.
- c) It also appears that alumni also do not pay much attention to the accreditation or ranking of their institutions. A corollary to this is that the alumni may not be leveraging their institution's accreditation/ranking in their advantage during their career decisions.

Thus the survey responses indicate that the students, alumni, employers and even bankers have marginal impact/utility of accreditation of the institution in their scheme of things. In other words, while the government, the accrediting agencies and the educational institutions are engaged in accreditation by investing human and financial resources over the last two decades the impact at end-user level is not encouraging. This is exacerbated by the fact that 80% of the eligible institutions are still out of the assessment and accreditation process. Accreditation is a process that involves trust and credibility. It is time to make assessment and accreditation trustworthy and credible among HEIs.

Thus the analysis of the data reveals and facilitates a presumption that if the end users like the employers lay emphasis on the accreditation status of an institution at the time of selection of candidates coming out of such institutions for entry level positions, it would act like a catalyst and trigger a positive chain reaction among the stakeholders. Accreditation would mean survival instinct for each stakeholder. The stakeholders like students and parents would opt for accredited institutions at the time of admissions and institutional stakeholders would look for building bridges between and among institutions to mutually and severally benefit each other through consolidation, sharing of resources, joint research projects etc. This kind of outcome will definitely go a long way as an offshoot of accreditation.

Thus, roping in employers in a meaningful way over the next few years needs to be explored. Apart from this, building consensus on benefits through accreditation, the bottom up approach may yield positive outcomes.



**CHAPTER 7**

**ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK IN THE  
PERSPECTIVE OF NEP 2020**



## **ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF NEP 2020**

The NEP envisages that accreditation process will perform dual functions of regulation and quality assurance. From the study of NAAC and NBA models of accreditation, it can be deduced that NAAC process of institutional accreditation is more versatile to create a model for integrating regulation with quality assurance. However, program accreditation may still be continued as optional for HEIs as practiced by NBA by refining the process further. The focus of program accreditation shall remain to be benchmarking quality criteria of programs across HEIs. For instance, program accrediting function can include academic leader in a specific discipline, identify the best practices and promote them among the institutes aspiring for being leaders in that discipline or similar disciplines. For example, IIM Ahmedabad (IIMA) is known for its case study method of teaching management education. IIMA may be tasked to leverage its expertise in disciplines where this method of teaching can lead to better learning outcomes for students and promote the practice of this method by creating a cadre of faculty members. Similarly, the best Chemistry department or Computer Science department, etc. in the country may be tasked to help in creating a roadmap for developing several such Chemistry or Computer Science departments.

The outcome of the NBA accreditation process is by a timescale of 6 years/3 years/No accreditation. This in itself is a first level indicator of better delivery of program. In addition, scores awarded against each criterion during the assessment helps further in differentiating the quality of functioning of various departments in different institutions. It may be noted that at present, the criteria scores by various departments is not made public and policy intervention is required by regulators to facilitate inter-departmental comparisons.

National Accreditation Council (NAC), one of the key vertical of HECI, will monitor and regulate integrated services of institutional as well as program accreditation under one umbrella through the services provided by Accrediting Institutions (AIs).

### **7.1. Regulation through Accreditation**

The idea of regulation of higher education through accreditation is a unique approach and has several synergies as envisaged in the NEP 2020.

As accreditation of HEIs is to be managed by NAC through multiple accreditation agencies, NAC may provide “core regulatory framework” to these agencies for assessing the compliance along with assessment of academic programs to achieve the task of regulation and quality assurance through accreditation. While implementing this, the accreditation agencies may initially satisfy themselves on effective compliance of regulation, and only then undertake the process for accreditation. *Thus compliance with regulations can be one of the ‘eligibility criterias’ for an HEI to be assessed for accreditation.*

The NAC will perform the role of nodal agency to coordinate with HECI, NHERC and GEC/PSSBs and collate core regulatory framework from time to time and advise the AIs for implementation. NAC shall ensure regulation through transparent processes as envisaged in NEP.

NAC will empower and facilitate AIs to create subordinate frameworks to differentiate their services to the HEIs, which would further strengthen the goal of regulation through accreditation without compromising the spirit of NEP 2020 as also promoting autonomy to HEIs.

## **7.2. Core vs. Subordinate Framework**

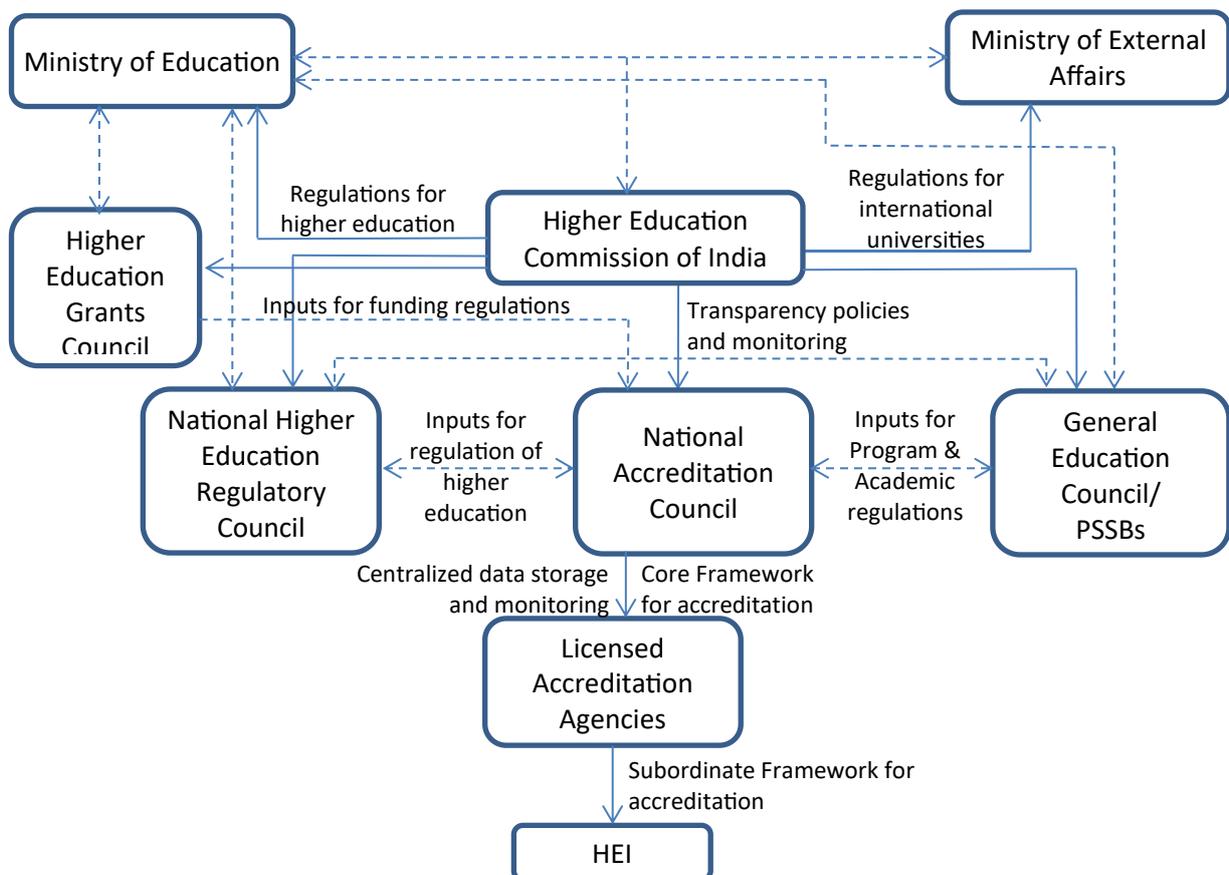
The core framework, formulated by NAC taking into consideration the regulations of higher education, shall be applicable to all nodal agencies uniformly. This framework remains non-negotiable and all HEIs have to strictly comply with the regulations. It is advocated that AIs should first assess an HEI under core framework. Only if the performance of HEI under core framework is satisfactory, AIs would advise the HEI to be assessed under subordinate framework and eventually acquire accreditation status. Thus subordinate frameworks are those which are specific to a particular AI which differentiates one from the other.

**Core Framework:** It deals with the compliance and disclosure with regard to academic regulation (example: Implementation of ABC regulations), financial regulations (example: Fee structure, salary to teaching and non-teaching staff, budgets provided in IDP, etc.), legal validity (example: Approvals for status of the institution, approvals for granting of degrees, etc.), transparency including disclosures on website (example: Faculty information, annual reports, etc.), mandatory evaluation standards with operational/functional flexibility, Other important norms as prescribed in Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019. NAC should frame guidelines in such a way that most of the core framework information is available on

the website of the HEI which ensures transparency. AIs would not have any discretion in assessing the HEI under this framework.

**Subordinate Framework:** Each AIs would have flexibility to determine its subordinate framework and differentiate itself from others. This would create competition among AIs and make the system vibrant. This may include the nature of institutions that the AI is specialized in assessing, unit of assessment, validity period of assessment, peer-team structure, variation in evaluation structure as permissible, mentoring services, professional charges within a band, etc.

The purpose of core and subordinate frameworks is that it facilitates NAC to prioritize and focus on what is important from regulatory perspective which HEI can engage AIs which fits their requirements. Thus this format provides for flexibility in choice for the institutions and also opens avenues for innovations in assessment practices depending on the changes in the environmental factors.



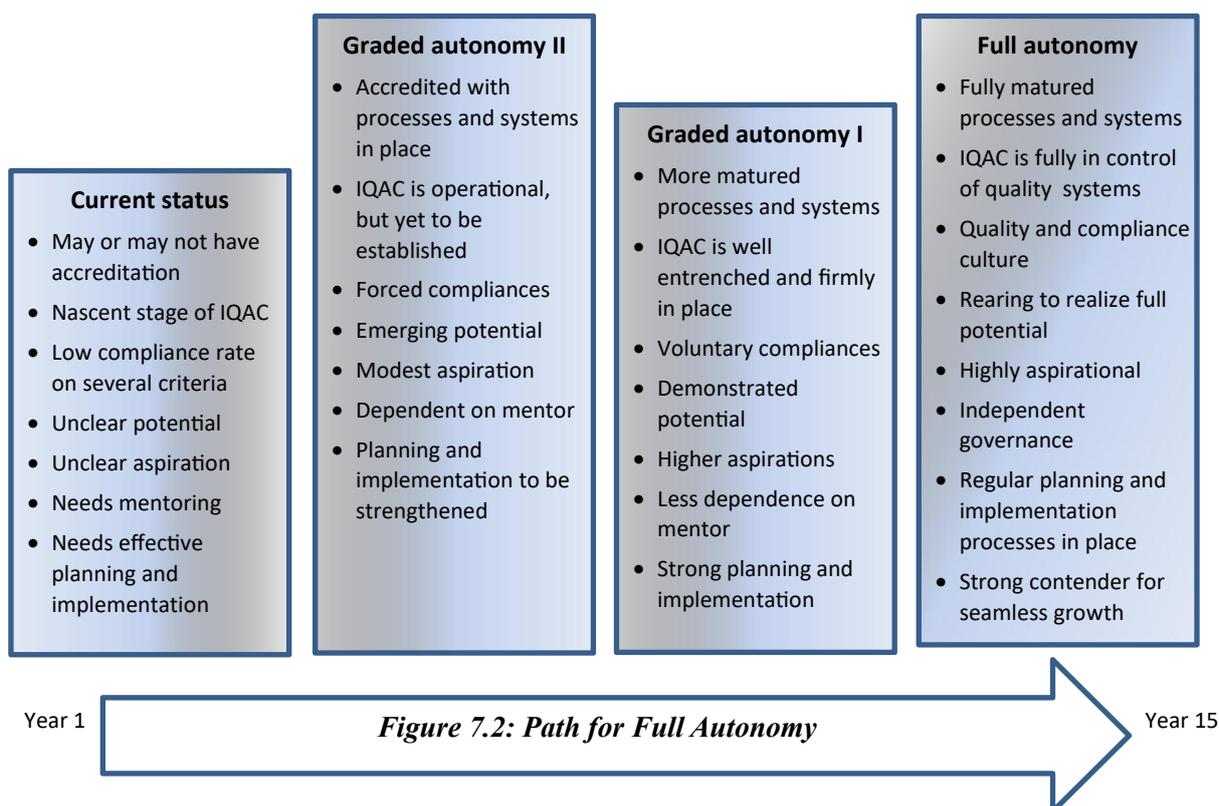
**Figure 7.1: Framework for Regulation through Accreditation**

It is advocated that NAC should provide pan-India jurisdiction for all AIs. Hence there will be multiple AIs operating simultaneously. This would create healthy competition among AIs and offer choice to HEIs. NAC should ensure that no AIs enjoy monopoly. HEIs shall comply with core framework prescribed by NAC and shall have the privilege of selecting AIs based on the subordinate framework depending on their needs. All AIs have to define their own subordinate framework while offering their services to HEIs which are made public. Over a period of time AIs will be differentiated by the quality of subordinate framework, core framework being uniform to all AIs, and the quality of services delivered by them. The NAC will monitor the performance and integrity of AIs on a regular basis and take corrective actions where necessary.

The pictorial representation of the process envisaged is given in *Figure 7.1*.

### 7.3. Accreditation and path to full autonomy for HEIs

It is well established that quality improvement and sustenance of higher education needs autonomy of HEIs. Affiliated colleges which are large in numbers catering to nearly 80% undergraduate education in the country have to transform themselves to reach the status of full autonomy in stages over a period of time. The path to full autonomy and its various stages need to be created and the colleges have to follow them. This is the only way to phase out the system of affiliated colleges in the country, improve quality standards in higher education and fulfill aspirations of NEP 2020.



The model depicted in **Figure 7.2**, provides a path for granting autonomy to HEIs from their current stage to graded autonomy II and graded autonomy I before acquiring full autonomy.

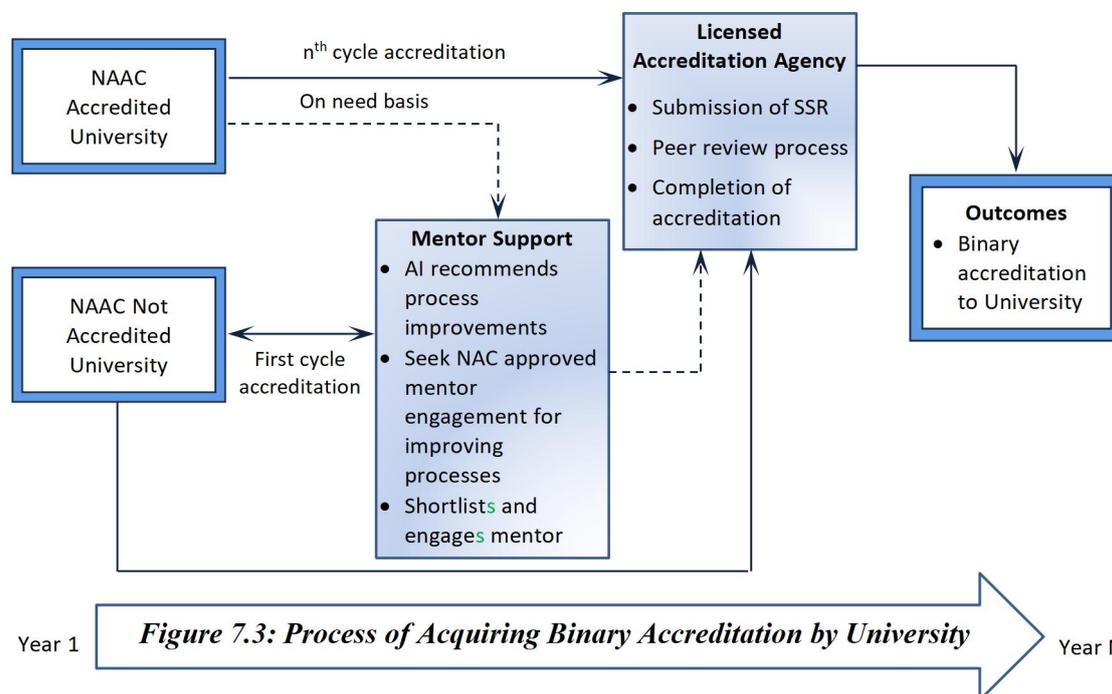
The attributes for each stage of autonomy are indicative and may need further refinement. This transformation will require around 12 to 15 years and the path may be linear or otherwise.

It is a challenge to create an assessment process for grading stage-wise. This requires investigation and extraction of appropriate attributes at each stage. The HEI has to demonstrate its capabilities to move from one stage to the other stage. Minimum timeline at each stage may be prescribed by NAC.

#### 7.4. Accreditation of Universities

By their very constitution, universities are expected to be fully autonomous. However, to move from the current system of accreditation to binary system as proposed in the NEP 2020, the process requires overhaul.

Given limited number of universities (around 1,000), a two stage process of assessment (Mentoring and peer team evaluation) and grant of binary accreditation is suggested. This transformation may be achieved by following the process as depicted in **Figure 7.3**.



**Figure 7.3: Process of Acquiring Binary Accreditation by University**

It is envisaged that the prospective university seeking accreditation and the AIs, would discuss and identify a mentor who will engage with university to identify the areas for improvement and suggest a timeframe for achieving the goalposts.

The mentor shall be from the approved list of trained mentors maintained by NAC. NAC will create the mechanism for identifying and training the mentors. The university will continue its dialogue with the mentor till achieving satisfactory improvements in its processes, before seeking accreditation by a peer team through AIs. The IQAC shall play a very constructive role in this process and will be a part of the evaluation process.

### **7.5. Binary accreditation**

The NEP 2020 provides for reaching a stage of granting binary accreditation to all HEIs. Only those HEIs which are granted full autonomy can aspire to have binary accreditation. By then, NAC has to formulate and publish guidelines for the binary accreditation.

In case of universities, the implementation of binary accreditation can be faster by bringing out the required guidelines and subjecting the universities to these guidelines henceforth.

### **7.6. Internal Quality Assurance**

The process of monitoring and maintaining the standards of teaching-learning processes and assessment in an HEI is referred as Internal Quality Assurance (IQA). Currently Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is tasked with this very unique process that has been promoted and implemented by NAAC right from its inception. UGC has also supported this initiative by providing financial assistance. However, till date the full potential of IQAC for promoting quality in higher education has not been exploited in full as was seen from the responses of participants in the accreditation process presented in the previous chapter.

The weak correlation between functioning of IQAC and continuous quality improvement mechanisms is a matter of serious concern and could be an impediment for successful implementation of IQAC. From the survey findings, it is also noted that the functioning of IQAC is sporadic in many a cases and gets activated just before an impending assessment by the accrediting body.

NEP 2020 is envisaging India to be a global leader in higher education providing quality human capital for domestic as well as global requirements. The vision of becoming Vishwaguru can only be realized through building processes and systems for quality education in our universities and colleges. Hence the role of IQAC would be critical in realizing the goal of becoming Vishwaguru.

In this context it is suggested to **bestow IQAC in HEIs a statutory status**. The empowered quality assurance unit could be termed as **Internal Quality Assurance Department (IQAD)**

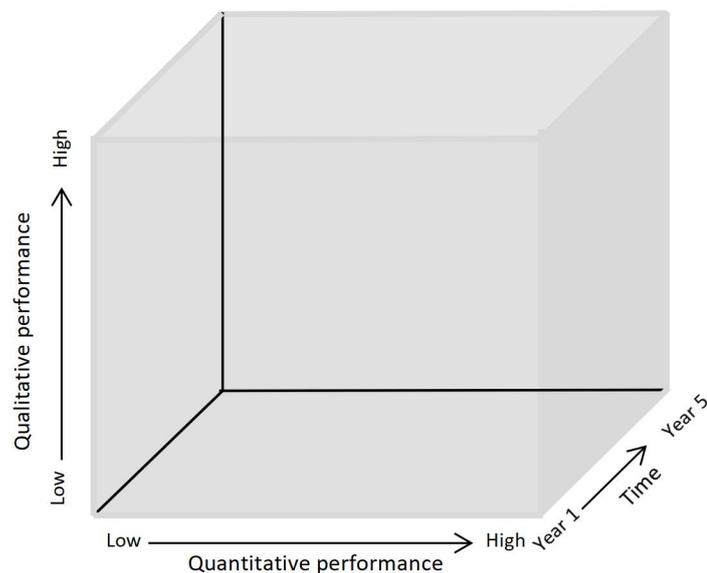
by clearly defining its role, responsibilities, constitution and functioning along with a unit of research in quality assurance. This is to ensure that the Internal Quality Assurance is treated on par with other departments of the HEIs in terms of empowerment. It should be headed by a Director or Dean who will report to the Board of Management. This would ensure that the office of the Vice Chancellor also comes under the ambit of quality management. It is also recommended the head of IQAD will be approved by the Board of Management after a search committee appointed by the board identifies a suitable candidate. It should have the same status as the Academic Council or the Finance Committee of an HEI. The structure and the activities of IQAD should be mandatorily disclosed on HEIs website.

Before finalizing guidelines for IQAD, the documentation by NAAC and HEIs where IQAC has done some exemplary work is to be identified to conceptualize on the best practices. A study of International experiences in this regard will also be very useful.

It is envisaged that the newly empowered IQAD with its functioning will play a critical role in transforming quality in higher education. The accreditation criteria by AIs/NAC should also include evaluating the functioning and governance of IQAD.

### 7.7.2QT - Three Determinants of Accreditation

Accreditation usually has five to seven years cycle time. Accreditation is a cross-sectional activity which takes place in a short time. It measures the qualitative and quantitative performance of HEI. Currently 70% of weightage is for quantitative metrics and 30% for qualitative metrics (as per RAF, NAAC).



**Figure 7.4: Three Determinants of Accreditation**

What is missing in the current assessment is the time dimension of performance. Quality improvement has to be done on a continuous scale by integrating technological processes to make data available in real time. Hence it is suggested that the assessment should measure the

performance of the HEI on time scale, which is the third dimension. Key quality performance indices such as faculty to student ratio, research publications, investments in academic infrastructure, student activities, etc. (these are indicative and not exhaustive) have to be measured for their consistency over a period of time. Otherwise, the HEIs may develop a tendency of meeting with the requirements just before the assessment and not follow through the process for a major part of the cycle time.

### **7.8. Use of Predictive Analytics in Accreditation**

Hitherto accreditation of HEI has been based on past performance. Further the assessment is done based on a cross-sectional study. Often there have been issues of managing the data to secure a grade without really improving the performance. With the development of technology, accreditation agencies need to develop innovative ways to use statistical analysis to uncover the relationships and patterns within the large volumes of data that is available to predict the behavior and events of HEIs and thus assess the potential. Hence innovations in accreditation process are required for using the big data that is available to predict the future of HEI.

### **7.9. International Practices**

India is on the cusp of internationalization of higher education and wants to play a significant role by becoming an education hub. It is important to understand the international accreditation processes and adapt them suitably and incorporate the same in the accreditation process.

### **7.10. Peer team functioning and review**

The revised accreditation framework (RAF) has brought in a paradigm shift since 2017 in the NAAC process. This de-emphasized the peer team evaluation to the extent of 70% by creating quantitative metrics which can be assessed through validation of data using computer programming. However, in the process while objectivity has increased, there is no field level study to show that it has contributed to the quality of education. Thus the effect of the quantification process has to be re-examined.

In view of the changes in the framework for assessment under the aegis of NEP 2020, and considering the challenges of implementing it, there is a need to re-examine the role of peer team and train the peer team members accordingly.

### **7.11. ODL/Online/Dual Mode Education**

One of the objectives of NEP 2020 is to enhance the GER to 50% by 2030. While promoting this objective, it is necessary to ensure uniformity of quality of higher education irrespective of mode of delivery viz., Campus-based, ODL and Online.

At present, the UGC has allowed few institutions to deliver ODL based on NAAC grade levels under the assumption that a good institution in face-to-face operations can develop expertise in other modes of operation. It is to be noted that NAAC has also created separate manual for accreditation of open universities and dual mode universities which acknowledges the fact that complementary delivery mechanisms are required. Online education has been a new phenomenon and has been used on a large scale as an outcome of the pandemic situation. As such, no systematic study has been conducted on the efficiency of the online processes even though we can acknowledge many of its benefits.

The competencies required for delivery of education through face-to-face, ODL and online modes differ as each one of them is unique in its structure and delivery, although the overall content may be same. It may not be necessary that an institution excelling in one mode of delivery can excel in other modes of delivery.

Since ODL/Dual Mode/Online education has a bearing on GER and quality aspects, it may be imperative to re-evaluate the standard operating procedures and look at the financial viability, faculty training and capacity to deliver quality programs in multiple modes.

### **7.12. Perspectives of employers on accreditation**

It is imperative that government and non-government sectors and many private organizations employ the end users of the human capital that is produced by the Higher Education Institutions. Hence the quality of higher education is not only a matter of importance to the stakeholders of higher education but also to the end-users.

Further, the findings of this study indicate that the accreditation and ranking status of an institution are of no significance or relevance to the employers seeking such information during job application or job interview. Similarly, the applicants too do not seem to attach great importance or highlight accreditation and ranking status of the institution in their job application.

One way of approaching the issue is that, over a period of time, MOE/HECI/NAC can create promotional campaigns for employers to make them aware of the quality of HEIs based on their accreditation status or rank. This aspect will drive HEIs to focus on quality of education, when students and parents start demanding better delivery of education and the status of accreditation or ranking as their career (in case of students) and the life of their children (in case of parents) have a bearing on quality and thus the status of accreditation will assume significance for these stakeholders.

Further, the study also acknowledges the fact that non-accredited institutions also churn out good quality or meritorious students and hence a balance approach is adopted and advocated.

### **7.13. Perspectives of bankers/financiers on accreditation**

Higher education has become a vehicle for securing livelihood and has come to mean a passport to a comfortable life. The country needs qualified human resource to meet growth needs and its national goals. It is obvious that many of the students coming from socially and economically challenged strata of society would look for financial assistance in the form of loans from banking and non-banking financial institutions to pursue their studies.

Investigation by this study has revealed that the agencies funding higher education are not considering accreditation status of HEIs as part of their evaluation of loan proposal. Hence HEIs which are accredited do not enjoy any specific preference for funding of prospective students among these agencies. Further awareness among banks and NBFCs on accreditation of HEIs is not up to the mark. Some of the banks do seek information on accreditation status of the HEIs, but no special consideration is being attached to it by them.

A perusal into the loan schemes of banks in India reveals that there are differential interest slabs for different stakeholders. In case of Home loans, the rate of interest offered to men and women in India are differential. Women are offered lower rate of interest by 0.05% compared to their male counterparts. Taking a leaf out of home loan scheme, the Government of India may consider the possibility of policy interventions to provide lower interest rates for students, increased band period for repayment, etc., for those applicants who seek admission in an accredited or ranked institution. This would, obviously encourage HEIs to seek accreditation status as it would mean attracting more students for enrolment.

### **7.14. Accelerating accreditation of colleges**

The available data reveals that the number of colleges that are accredited as on date, is very low across the country, and also the percentage of accredited colleges from state to state is

highly skewed. To accelerate the process of accreditation, these colleges require handholding. Hence there is a need to aggressively promote schemes such as UGC's Paramarsh and AICTE's Margadarshak. It is also suggested that the affiliating universities extend support and promote these initiatives to accelerate accreditation process by setting targets.

#### **7.15. Developing leadership pipeline for HEIs**

The success of a path breaking NEP 2020 depends on the availability of right leaders at right places in the HEIs. Many studies indicate the dearth of efficient and trained leaders in HEIs at various levels. Hence there is an urgent need for designing and implementing programs for developing academic leaders to take responsible positions/roles in the HEIs. This aspect has been referred in NEP 2020 (19.4, Page 49).

Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs) and other training agencies involved in implementation of NEP 2020 must take up training and create a pool of highly trained and empowered leaders to be at the helm of affairs at HEIs. Such programs should include inputs on regulations in higher education and the accreditation processes along with other inputs.

The designing of leadership development programs should address the need for change management from a top down approach, a deep rooted practice in our education system, to a bottom up approach, promoting democratic and transparent functioning of HEIs and with emphasis on autonomy with responsibility. MOE/HECI/NAC may have to provide financial assistance and human resources support for driving this change process.

Accreditation process should also explicitly give credit for processes and initiatives taken by institutions to create leaders.

#### **7.16. Sustainable Development Goals**

It is imperative that the country has to comply with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030. HEIs have a major role to play in the process. Hence it is suggested that the new assessment formulation under NAC may include appropriate metrics for achieving the desired goals by HEIs.

#### **7.17. Need to conduct an impact analysis**

At present NAAC arrives at a grade for an institution based on seven levels by collecting data/information under various Qualitative and Quantitative metrics. To convert it into attributes (benchmarks) for a particular level of grade remains a tough challenge. This aspect

gets reinforced by the analysis of the survey conducted for the purpose and validated by interaction with experts.

As on date, NAAC has assessed and accredited nearly 10,000 institutions across the length and breadth of the country (including institutions with multiple cycles of accreditation). However, till-date an independent impact study and analysis of the assessment process at the institutional (ground) level has not been conducted. It may be worthwhile to commission such a study by the NAC to investigate whether unambiguous attributes can be established for a grade level, especially in case of colleges. The scope of the study may include the sensitivity of the process across various geographical locations, quality sustenance/improvement across cycles, etc. It is needless to say that, the design for the study would be vital and need to be undertaken quickly by NAC after adequate preparations.

The study can also focus on whether there is a need for multiple accreditations, because of its consequences i.e. creating continuous (excessive) workload for faculty and other staff members. This issue has been raised by many accredited institutions and they opine that the preparatory efforts for accreditation come at the cost of teaching/research activities.



## **FUTURE STUDY IMPERATIVES**



## **FUTURE STUDY IMPERATIVES**

- India being a vast country, the incorporation of technology based accreditation, which is a forced outcome of the pandemic, can be leveraged effectively.
- There is a need for a study to examine the vital outcome experiences of both NAAC and NBA accreditation processes in order to strengthen the new accreditation framework.
- Periodic review of the assessment and accreditation in the field level at National and State levels to be undertaken which is independent of the agencies involved.
- Continuous research on the process of assessment and accreditation to be an ongoing activity under the rules and regulations of NAC.
- The concept and definition of Binary accreditation i.e. its meaning and application should evolve over time.
- Models of internationalization of higher education have to evolve in due course.
- The correlation between and among ‘input-process-output’ is to be clearly examined in the NAAC, NBA accreditation processes
- Concentration of NIRF ranked institutions among colleges (Top 100) in Delhi and also their good performance in NAAC grading (A levels), signifies the need for further study to understand the input-process-output of the functioning of those institutions
- The difference in the hierarchy of ranking vis-à-vis grading has to be analyzed
- The difference in hierarchy of ranking in universities and its units (pharmacy, management, engineering etc.) needs further study
- Stakeholder perception of NAAC grading which is a five year process and NIRF ranking which is a yearly phenomenon needs further understanding
- Integration of the experiences of International accreditation (Example: ABET, IET, AACSB etc.,) of institutions in India can be integrated with the new framework as envisaged by NEP 2020.

- Explore avenues to enhance the role of industry partners who are one of the largest end users of HEI outcomes

To conclude, the study envisaged is a macro level understanding of the present accreditation process followed in India and possible way forward to use it as a tool for Regulation (survival tool) and also Accreditation (aspirational tool). Needless to say that an in-depth study in many aspects as indicated under “Future Study Imperatives” will be necessary to come out with a viable model of accreditation to address the needs of survival and aspirations.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aleemuddin, S. The Role of IQAC in Promoting the Quality Education in Higher Educational Institutions. *Academic and Administrative Audit*, 54.
- All India Council for Technical Education (2020-21). Guideline Document for Margadarshan Initiative for Mentoring AICTE Approved Institute to Improve Quality Parameters. AICTE. <https://www.aicte-india.org/sites/default/files/margdarshak/Revised%20Guideline%20on%20Margdarshan%20Initiative.pdf>
- Boehringer, K., Blyth, S., & Scott, F. (2012). Notes on the emerging accreditation regimes in Australia and New Zealand. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 2(3), 25-29. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v2i3.76>
- Government of India (2018): Ministry of Human Resource Development UGC (Categorisation of Universities [only] for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations 2018, *The Gazette of India*, 12 February 2018 (Part III, Section 4), [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/1435338\\_182728.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/1435338_182728.pdf)
- Government of India, Ministry of Education (2020). National Education Policy 2020. New Delhi.
- Government of India, Ministry of Education, (1971) Education and National Development; Report of the Education Commission 1964- 66, New Delhi.
- Government of India, Ministry of Education, (1986). Programme on Action 1992. National Education Policy 1986. New Delhi.
- Gupta, B.L., (2020). Strategies for promoting and sustaining autonomy in higher education institutions in the context of national education policy 2020. *International Journal of Educational Research and Studies*.2(1). 23-27
- Harclerod, F. Fred (1980). Accreditation: History, Process and Problems. Higher Education Research Report No.6. American Association for Higher Education, USA.
- India Higher Education Profile (2018-19). Association of Indian Universities. <http://www.aiu.ac.in/>
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (2013): Report of the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan, National Higher Education Mission. New Delhi: Government of India.

- Munoli, S. P. (2020). Role of IQAC In Quality Enhancement In Colleges. In NATIONAL SEMINAR
- OECD (2005). Governance and Quality Guidelines in Higher Education: A Review of Governance, Arrangements and Quality Assurance Guidelines. Paris: OECD.
- Sancheti, S., Pillai, L. (2020). Institutional Autonomy in Indian Higher Education System- Need for a serious debate. In Reimagining Indian Universities (pp. 1-20). Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi (India).
- Sankaran, Kizhekepat & Joshi, G..(2016). Autonomy for Excellence in Higher Education in India. Nitte Management Review.10(1).
- Schindler, L., Puls-Elvidge, S., Welzant, H., & Crawford, L. (2015). Definitions of quality in higher education: A synthesis of the literature. Higher Learning Research Communications, 5(3), 3-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v5i3.244>
- Singh, Chanrani (2018). International practices in assessment and accreditation at higher education. December 21, 2018. <https://digitalllearning.eletsonline.com/2018/12/international-practices-in-assessment-and-accreditation-at-higher-education/>
- Universal Grants Commission (2019). Paramarsh. UGC Scheme for Mentoring NAAC Accreditation Aspirant Institutions to promote Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Universal Grants Commission. [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/8400459\\_ParamarshEnglish.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/8400459_ParamarshEnglish.pdf)
- University Grants Commission (2013). Guidelines for the Creation of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAS) in accredited institution (Revised in 2013). NAAC. Pg.4-5. [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5172195\\_Guideline\\_IQACs.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5172195_Guideline_IQACs.pdf)
- Wilson, O. Meredith (1971). Institutional Quality and Effectiveness. Ed. Harclerod, F. Fred, *The American College Testing Program*, USA. p.71-78.
- Srinivas, G, & Salil, S. (2021). NIRF: regional realities for intervention. Current Science, Vol.120, No.4, 25.
- National Rankings 2017, MHRD, [https://www.nirfindia.org/Docs/Ranking\\_Methodology\\_And\\_Metrics\\_2017.pdf](https://www.nirfindia.org/Docs/Ranking_Methodology_And_Metrics_2017.pdf) and [https://www.nirfindia.org/nirfpdfcdn/2020/pdf/Report/IR2020\\_Report.pdf](https://www.nirfindia.org/nirfpdfcdn/2020/pdf/Report/IR2020_Report.pdf)

## **ANNEXURES**



## ANNEXURES

### ***Annexure I - Government Bodies responsible for Assessment and Accreditation in India***

#### **National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC)**

NAAC was established in 1994 as an autonomous institution of the UGC with its Headquarters in Bengaluru. The mandate of NAAC as reflected in its vision statement is in making quality assurance an integral part of the functioning of HEIs.

#### **Vision**

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

#### **Objectives**

- NAAC focus is on the Quality improvement of HEIs. Started the process for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education.
- To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality in teaching-learning and research
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education
- To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programs; and
- To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

#### ***National Board for Accreditation (NBA)***

NBA was initially established by the AICTE under section 10(u) of the AICTE Act, in the year 1994, in order to assess the qualitative competence of the programs offered by educational institution from diploma level to post-graduate level in engineering and technology, management, pharmacy, architecture and related disciplines, which are approved by AICTE. The Memorandum of Association and Rules of NBA were amended in April 2013, to make it completely independent of AICTE, administratively as well as financially. The NBA conducts evaluation of programs of technical institutes on the basis of laid down norms.

## **Vision**

To be an accrediting agency of international standard by ensuring the highest degree of credibility in assurance of quality and relevance to professional education and come up to the expectations of its stakeholder's viz., academicians, corporates, educational institutions, government, industry, regulators, students and their parents.

## **Objectives**

- To assess and accredit the technical education programs;
- To evolve standards and parameters for assessment and accreditation in line with the parameters laid down by the appropriate statutory regulatory authority for coordination, determination and regulation of standards in the concerned field of technical education;
- To promote excellence through a benchmarking process, which is helpful in determining whether or not an institution is able to achieve its mission and broad based goals, and in interpreting the results of the outcomes assessment process;
- To promote quality conscious system of technical education where excellence, relevance to market needs and participation by all stakeholders are prime and major determinants;
- To build a technical education system as facilitator of human resources, that will match the national goals of growth by competence, contribution to economy through competitiveness and compatibility with societal development;
- To set the quality benchmark targeted at global and national stockpile of human capital in all fields of technical education;
- To conduct evaluation of self-assessment of technical institutions and/or programs offered by them on the basis of guidelines, norms and standards specified by it; and
- To contribute to the domain of knowledge in quality parameters, assessment and evaluation.

## ***The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)***

NIRF was approved by the MHRD and launched by Honorable Minister of erstwhile Human Resource Development on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015. This framework outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country. The methodology draws from the overall recommendations and broad understanding arrived at by a Core Committee set up by MHRD, to identify the broad parameters for ranking various universities and institutions. The parameters broadly cover "Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, and Perception."

## **Annexure II - Internal Mechanism for Accreditation: Internal Quality Assurance Cell**

### **(IQAC)**

NAAC is probably the only body in India to promote, right from its inception, the concept of continuous quality improvement, as it was felt from international experience that lasting improvements in standards cannot come about only by accreditation from outside (external). Thus the concept of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) was promoted as a post accreditation quality sustenance activity.

Many HEIs already have established the IQAC as a post accreditation quality sustenance activity. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC will become a part of an institution's system and work towards realizing the goals of quality sustenance and enhancement. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of institutions. It is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) activities of the HEIs.

IQAC is considered as a vehicle for ensuring the quality of 'education' in HEIs, making sure that it is effective and efficient with self-defined standards. It plays a catalytic role to improve the performance of HEIs and also facilitates internalization of the quality. IQAC is not only meant to create awareness on the internal quality but also establish credibility for the external quality evaluation. NAAC has accepted and authorized IQAC to work as the internal and integral catalyst to ensure change towards quality in universities and colleges.

### **Objectives of IQAC include but are not limited to the following:**

- To develop a system for conscious, consistent, and catalytic action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the institution;
- To create and nurture a good quality culture;
- To channelize the efforts and measures of the institution towards academic excellence; and
- To become a potential vehicle for ushering in quality by working out intervention strategies to remove deficiencies and enhance quality.

**Functions of the IQAC include, but are not limited to the following:**

- Development and application of quality benchmarks/parameters for the various academic and administrative activities of the institution;
- Dissemination of information on various quality parameters of higher education;
- Organization of workshops, seminars on quality-related themes and promotion of quality circles;
- Documentation of the various programs/activities leading to quality improvement;
- Acting as a nodal agency of the institution for quality-related activities; and
- Preparation of the AQAR to be submitted to NAAC based on the quality parameters.

The role of IQAC in HEIs is distinct and significant, as it works towards improving and maintaining the quality in education. The IQAC is an operative and efficient monitoring mechanism in the HEIs. Even Institutions have acknowledged the emerging needs and demands. Hence, they have established IQAC as per the guidelines issued by NAAC and with external quality assurance are striving for a total quality management of their institutions.

### **Annexure III - Quality Initiatives by UGC and AICTE**

#### **Paramarsh Scheme**

UGC, in its 532nd meeting in 2018, as a part of its "Quality Mandate" has set one of its goals as "Every Institution shall get NAAC accreditation by 2022." In order to achieve this goal, UGC has introduced a scheme called "Paramarsh" for mentoring NAAC accreditation aspirant institutions to promote quality assurance in Higher Education. The main objective of the scheme is to enhance the overall quality of the mentee institutions and Mentoring the Non-Accredited HEIs to enable them to get accredited.

The scheme envisages a Hub and Spoke model with the Hub referred to as the mentor institution and the spoke as mentee institution. The mentor institution should be NAAC accredited with A grade having an overall score of 3.26 and above.

So far, 167 Mentor Institutions have been approved under "Paramarsh" to mentor 936 non-accredited HEIs.

#### **Margadarshan and Margadarshak Scheme**

Under Margadarshan scheme, a well-established AICTE approved institute referred to as Margadarshan Institute or Mentor Institute (MI) is supported with an objective to mentor up to 10 nearby institutes in achieving the NBA accreditation. Through Margadarshak scheme, senior academicians (serving or superannuated) shall be nominated as Margadarshak (MD) to act as individual mentors for guiding beneficiary institutes to achieve the NBA accreditation and enhance the quality of technical education.

Till date, 41 Mentor Institutes, 321 Margadarshaks and 964 Mentee Institutions have been identified under the scheme. It is expected that the initiative will bring about a tangible change in the technical education being imparted by enhancing the quality mandate.

## **Annexure IV - Autonomy versus Accreditation**

The 2As - Autonomy and Accreditation are perceived as the cornerstones of and for 'quality' education. There is a presumption among the practitioners of higher education that (giving) autonomy (to institutions) will invariably lead to quality, and there is also an alternate view point that it is the process of accreditation which compels institutions to acquire quality. The debate on which precedes what continues.

However, governments and regulatory authorities in many parts of the world, including that of India, have resorted to granting autonomy to institutions to put them on the path of sustainable quality education which in the long-term would entitle accreditation.

### **Global Perception on Autonomy**

UNESCO defines institutional autonomy as, "a degree of self-governance, necessary for effective decision-making by institutes of higher education regarding their academic work standards, management, and related activities." Since the beginning of the 21st century, Autonomy of Institutions has been significant in analyzing the academic freedom of any HEI across the world. Academic expansion, Innovation and Excellence are linked with the autonomy in higher education or to say, Autonomy of Institutions is linked with the Academic Autonomy.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005), notes that autonomy is usually determined by the level of capability and the right of an institution to decide its course of action about institutional policy, planning, financial and staff management, compensation, students, and academic freedom, without interference from outside authorities. Though countries across the world have their own assessment mechanism to provide autonomy to the institutions, the prominence of "Institutional Autonomy" and its relevance in the quality of education remains the same.

### **India's Approach to Institutional Autonomy**

In India, the 1964-66 Education Commission recommended college autonomy that would be instrumental in promoting academic excellence. It was proposed in order to remove the bottlenecks that existed in the affiliation system and to enhance the quality of education. The Commission said: "We would like to refer to the question of autonomous colleges which has been under discussion for many years. Where there is an outstanding college or a small cluster of very good colleges within a large university which has shown the capacity to improve itself markedly, consideration should be given to granting it an autonomous status.

This would involve the power to frame its own rules of admission, to prescribe its course of study, to conduct examinations, and so on.... We recommend that provision for the recognition of such autonomous colleges be made in the constitution of the universities" (The Education Commission 1971, GOI).

The National Education Policy (1986-92) stated "The system of affiliated colleges does not provide autonomy to deserving colleges to frame curricula, courses of studies, or their own system of evaluation. Although the UGC has been supporting this programme, only 21 colleges have been conferred autonomous status so far". Hence, it proposed to develop 500 colleges into autonomous colleges in the Seventh Plan, and replace the affiliating system in the long run and also formulate objectives to provide academic freedom to the autonomous institutions.

UGC recognizes that autonomy is pivotal in promoting and institutionalizing excellence in higher education and that the regulatory framework needs to facilitate better performing institutions towards excellence in higher education. According to the report of the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) submitted in June 2005, there were just 204 autonomous colleges, spanning 11 states and 43 universities. The relevance of the autonomous status of universities is reiterated by many committees and recommendations in India, one of the recent being from Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) (MHRD, 2013) which suggested amendments or legislations to ensure the existence of state universities as autonomous independent entities. Though there are timely interventions and revision of guidelines, the process of granting autonomy to HEIs has not been up-to expectations. There are 993 Universities and over 40,000 colleges out of which only 117 universities and 827 colleges are autonomous so far across 25 states. Out of 827 autonomous colleges, 148 colleges are accredited by NAAC. Tamil Nadu has the highest number of 227 autonomous HEIs followed by Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh with 117 and 114 Institutions respectively.

NEP 2020 also envisages for graded autonomy of colleges. Section 10 in NEP 2020 states that the main thrust of the policy is to end the fragmentation of HEIs into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges and higher education cluster/knowledge hubs. It also mentions about stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation. Also, the colleges will be encouraged, mentored, supported and incentivized to gradually attain the minimum benchmarks required for each level. It is also envisaged that every college would develop into either an Autonomous

degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university - in the latter case, it would be fully a part of the university. With appropriate accreditations, Autonomous degree-granting Colleges could evolve into Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities, if they so aspire.

The global approach to quality education is through autonomy and whereas India's road to quality education is through accreditation. This has been reinforced in the NEP 2020 by granting of graded autonomy through graded accreditation.

## **Annexure V - Analysis of Responses from Stakeholders**

The responses received under various categories are paraphrased below

### **Response from Head of the Institution on difficulties faced to undergo the process of A & A (indicated in random)**

1. Acute shortage of quality faculty
2. Inadequate fund to sustain and support programs
3. Locational disadvantages
4. Commitment from stakeholders ( ex: top level management)
5. Multiple regulations to be followed Ex: AICTE, NAAC, NBA, University, State Higher education Department, etc.,
6. Resource constraints (financial)
7. Inadequate funds for infrastructural development
8. Rapid technology changes and subsequent limitations

### **About the process:**

1. Arrangements for the peer team particularly in rural areas
2. Irrelevance of questions ( ex: backward areas: collaboration with industry, placement particularly at undergraduate level, alumni contribution particularly from women's colleges)
3. Data requirements to be frozen for a particular period and not dynamic on a daily basis
4. Peer team not open to revising scores even when additional data is provided

### **Changes Envisaged in the Process**

1. Training for the institution faculty and staff for preparation of reports
2. Peer team to be trained well
3. Documentation to be made simpler

**Faculty response to the changes the present accreditation and ranking process need to undergo (indicated in random)**

1. Most of the institutions are working for the sake of accreditation/ranking and main purpose of quality sustenance and enhancement defeated.
2. Accreditation Process is directly or indirectly exerting a lot of pressure on the faculty which is affecting the teaching-learning process
3. Scope for creating fake documents/evidences should be minimized
4. Lot of investments and major decisions are made shortly before the peer team visit only to please the team (Hasty decision making process)
5. Continuous online monitoring would be better than planned peer team visit which will eliminate scope for setting up stage ( physical visits may be eliminated)
6. Students' interactions to be randomized and undertaken without involving authorities
7. Once the accreditation process is over fear of job security for the faculty prevails
8. Duration of peer team visits to be increased
9. The intention behind POs, COs, PEOs is good. However most colleges copy paste them and replace words with synonyms
10. There should be one accreditation for all colleges
11. Importance to teachers and staff salary particularly in self-financing institutions
12. Spiritual, philosophical , moral teaching should be included in the curriculum
13. Stress relieving activities like yoga, meditation and physical activities be given importance in daily schedule and evaluated
14. Faculties should be given permission to attend FDPs
15. Work life balance of employees must be taken into consideration
16. There is a need to accord due recognition for sincere and hardworking staff
17. Institutions with special and distinct focus must not be measured by the same parameters
18. Basic requirements can be same for all institutions and niche institutions should have separate measures
19. Educational goals are relatively achievable, transformational goals -personality and character goals are difficult to achieve and measure

20. Governance, leadership and management should be given top priority
21. Accreditation process should not be just based on documentation (NAAC 70:30 rule to be revisited)
22. Accreditation /ranking must not be used as a mechanism for regulation because colleges may pay more attention towards ranking than students
23. Accreditation outcome in the form of grades seem to promote a horse race among institutions. Quantification and procuring numbers like number of papers, number of X or Y, than real quality. Quality and quantity parameters must be decided on case by case basis
24. Competency of faculty to be assessed
25. Providing quality education free of cost is really challenging, need to rank such institutions to raise motivation.
26. 99% of teams are biased
27. Instead of one peer team multilevel assessment teams would be better

**Peer team response to the changes the present accreditation and ranking process need to undergo (indicated in random)**

1. Binary accreditation to be looked into in detail
2. Accreditation process cannot be made mandatory and expensive at the same time
3. Peer teams need thorough training
4. Rigorous selection process to be put in place for the selection of the peer team to avoid malpractice
5. Online continuous process of assessment
6. Provision for mentoring institutions before they apply for assessment should be made
7. Criteria needed to ascertain whether faculty and staff are paid salary as per regulations
8. International student cell may be at the university level and not at the college level
9. Accreditation/ranking needs to be realistically based on employability of outgoing students
10. Role of teachers need to be collated with departmental achievements in teaching, learning, research and consultancy

11. Minimum standards must be prescribed for key-activities
12. Social security measures should also be included in the criteria
13. Quantitative metrics should be produced automatically from AISHE and other portals
14. More independent institutes for carrying Accreditation jobs
15. Need to practically justify all metrics and to give weightage accordingly
16. Digitization of lectures and techno savvy attitude to be made a main component
17. Indian culture and orientation may be given a trust

**Common questions addressed to all i.e., Head of Institution, Faculty,  
Peer-team members and IQAC coordinators**

Do you think efficient and effective functioning of the IQAC and its evaluation can itself be used as an indicator of continuous quality improvement/regulation of institutions?

More than 60% of the respondents have agreed to the above view and in case of Heads of the

Institutions, about 75% have concurred.

**Role of IQAC as envisaged (indicated in random):**

1. Work as a think tank of the institution and not as program organizer
2. Shall focus on continuous development of institution to achieve its vision through defined mission
3. Shall set up quality benchmarks for improvement
4. Shall constantly evaluate the institution progress through self- developed evaluation system
5. Carry out various audits such as Academic Audit, Activity Audit, Green Audit etc.,
6. It is a time tested cell to help internalize and institutionalize quality culture
7. Should have people with high morale, vision and leadership qualities
8. Should be given independent authority and should be a multilayered body

## **Perceptions of the End Users:**

### **Students**

Students were particularly asked if they were aware of the accreditation status of the institution before they joined a particular institution. Large percentage of students was really not aware of the status. This indirectly provides us with the hint that an important stakeholder i.e. the student is not adding value to the process of A & A.

### **Alumni**

The students who pass out of an institution are expected to carry within them the quality of education imparted to them. The major indirect stakeholders in the education process- the society and the government can be satisfied if the learning outcomes of a student from an accredited institution is considered superior to one from a not accredited institution.

The response from the alumni on whether the accredited status of their institution mattered for their initial selection (first job) was not very positive, nor students felt its importance while making a job application.

### **Employer**

The response from the employer end seems to be mixed. It was not very apparent that employers select an institution for campus recruitment based on its accreditation status. Employers visit large number of institutions for campus recruitment irrespective of their accredited/graded status. It has also been noticed that a few application forms for entry level recruitments do seek information on the accredited status of the institution but not sure on the weightage accorded to it.

Scanning/scrutiny of application forms prescribed to be filled up by the candidate for entry level appointments at government, PSU and even universities does not seek information on the accredited status of the institution.

### **Bankers**

It has been noticed in the last few years that bankers when they offer educational loan, seek information on the accredited status of the institution in which the student intends to pursue his/her studies. But the offer of loan is largely based on the collateral offered by the student. It may be required to prevail upon them to provide interest discounts for students opting to enter accredited institutions.



# Research Expert Consultations

## **Dr. S Vaidhyasubramaniam**

GMP (Harvard),  
Vice-Chancellor & Tata Consultancy Services  
Chair Professor of Management,  
SASTRA Deemed University  
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

## **Dr. Vishnukant S Chatpalli**

Vice Chancellor,  
Karnataka State Rural Development  
and Panchayat Raj University  
Gadag, Karnataka

## **Prof. Y M Jayraj**

Adviser to Chancellor, Dr. D.Y.Patil Vidyapeeth  
Pune, Maharashtra

## **Prof. Amiya Kumar Pattanayak**

Former Vice Chancellor, Utkal University of  
Culture,  
Bhubaneswar, Odisha

## **Prof. Yoginder Singh Verma**

Former Vice Chancellor and Pro Vice Chancellor  
Central University of Himachal Pradesh  
Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh

## **Dr. Dhaneswar Harichandan**

Former Professor cum Director,  
IDOL, University of Mumbai  
Mumbai, Maharashtra

## **Prof. Niranjana Roy**

Former Dean, MG School of  
Economics and Commerce  
Former Director, DIQA/IQAC  
Assam University, Assam

## **Prof. Debendra Chandra Baruah**

Professor & Head, Department of Energy  
Tezpur University, Assam

## **Prof. Ramkrishna Vyas**

Former Director,  
International Institute of Professional Studies &  
Former Dean of Management,  
Devi Ahilya University  
Indore, Madhya Pradesh

## **Dr. J Raja Murugadoss**

Director, NSRIT  
Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

## **Dr. M R Kurup**

Former Principal, V G VAZE COLLEGE  
Secretary, Kelkar Ed Trust  
Mulund East, Mumbai, Maharashtra

## **Dr. Amrita Paresh Patel**

Former Principal,  
Uma Arts and Nathiba Commerce Mahila College  
Gandhinagar, Gujarat

## **Dr. K Meharmani**

Former Principal, D.R.W.COLLEGE  
Gudur, Andhra Pradesh

## **Dr. Christine Coutinho**

Principal, Loreto College  
Kolkata, West Bengal

