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## NAAC Accreditation System In Rural Area: Challenges And Opportunities

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**Abstract:** Assessment and Accreditation process conducted by NAAC has emerged as a big challenge to the colleges situated in rural areas. As compared to the colleges in urban areas, the colleges in rural areas have to suffer from several problems. For NAAC Assessment and Accreditation information about seven criteria of NAAC that are mandatory to evaluate the performance of the colleges in rural areas. The new NAAC revised frame work methodology tries to bring about uniformity in the model of Assessment and Accreditation; however, applying same yardsticks to all colleges in rural areas, may not fetch desired results considering their social, economic and geographical conditions and other factors. In this context, this paper focuses on the following aspects: revised frame work methodology of NAAC, the concept of Assessment and accreditation process, various issues in rural colleges faced by NAAC, and steps to prevent those issues.

**Key words:** Colleges in Rural Area, Accreditation and Assessment, NAAC.

### Introduction

The development of standard of higher education in India, the NAAC was established by UGC in the concluding part of the last century. The head quarter of this organization is located in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The rules and regulations of NAAC regarding the Assessment and Accreditation are framed and revised from time to time introducing conspicuous changes in the last few years. The NAAC has uniform parameters for the Assessment and Accreditation of colleges across the country. However, the fact is that the problems faced by colleges in rural area and the colleges in urban area are quite different. And hence, the colleges situated in rural area have to face certain difficulties and problems while undergoing the process of Assessment and Accreditation conducted by NAAC. In the present paper an attempt has been made to analyze the difficulties and problems faced by colleges in the rural areas.

### Establishment of Colleges in Rural Area

The rural areas with inadequate population are provided with special relaxation by the government about the various rules and regulations for the establishment of colleges. On the other hand, in urban areas all these rules and regulations are literally to be followed. However, the colleges are started on the basis of required population and infrastructural facilities. The central government has founded some model colleges in the rural areas. All things considered, there is enough scope to say that there are, beyond doubt, so many problems in the rural area for running colleges while in cities colleges have all the requisite infrastructural facilities.

### Prevailing Conditions in Rural Area

There are several colleges in rural area well equipped with all the facilities and these colleges are granted with 2(f) and 12(B) status by UGC. Such colleges get funds from UGC for the development of various facilities on campus. But there is a big group of such colleges in rural areas which is not funded either by UGC or government or any other agency and non-salary grant. However, such colleges are run by the management bodies their own. These colleges perform a vital role in the educational development of the

people living in the villages. Such colleges have to face several problems and difficulties while undergoing NAAC Assessment and Accreditation.

### **Need and Significance of the study**

The NAAC's assessment can judge the quality of a college or a university, it is expected that NAAC's assessment will lead to the academic uplift and qualitative up gradation in the colleges. In order to find out whether NAAC's assessment to these rural colleges have brought about academic as well as up gradation, the investigator took an interest to study the NAAC's Assessment and Accreditation on the academic as well as development of some of the rural Colleges.

### **Objectives of the Study**

To understand the establishment of colleges and Prevailing Conditions of rural areas.

To know the problems faced by the colleges in rural areas for assessment and accreditation.

To know the Remedial Steps or challenges of rural colleges for improvement

### **Problems Faced by the Colleges in Rural Areas for Assessment and Accreditation**

The colleges situated in rural region have several problems from the NAAC Assessment and Accreditation point of view. These problems can be enumerated in short as follows:

1. These colleges lack in requisite infrastructural facilities. However, they fulfill the demand of higher education in the rural areas.
2. The students are provided with guidance on the important issues like the need of awareness of rural life, market places etc. along with the awareness of environmental conservation. All other facilities are made available for the students by the teachers. In spite of this, most of the time the students have to suffer from the problems such as unavailability of means of transportation, lack of residential facilities at the places where the colleges are situated in rural areas, poor internet connectivity etc.
3. As the most of the colleges in rural areas are not funded by UGC, the student's under taking research activities have to conduct their research with the help of inadequate funds and other facilities provided by the concerned colleges.
4. Most of the colleges are situated in the remote parts of the rural regions and so the funds and other government's schemes take a long time to reach the students of such colleges.
5. Dearth of full time teachers.
6. The new norms and regulations for PhD supervisor and place of research brought out by UGC and the respective affiliating universities have brought down the percentage of teachers recognized as PhD guides to all time lows.
7. The non-availability of full time teachers in the colleges due to various reasons has affected the research projects undertaken.
8. For the want of teachers in the colleges the score related with innovation ecosystem research publication and awards, extension activities and collaboration is also adversely affected.
9. Most of the colleges in rural areas face electricity failures or if available, it is only for few odd hours.
10. The availability of internet facility is even more critical. The poor connectivity or frequent disconnections forces one to switch over to manual processes.
11. The government has stopped providing non salary grants and therefore, the colleges in rural and tribal areas are unable to allocate adequate funds to procure books, journals, e-books, e-journals etc. in the libraries.
12. The colleges in rural and tribal areas are unable to allocate adequate funds for sports activities due to funds crunch.
13. The colleges in rural and tribal areas are unable to allocate adequate funds for maintenance for physical facilities like laboratories, library, sports complex, computers, classrooms, etc.
14. The students in rural areas face language barriers, especially with regards to skills in English. This affects their performance in job placement/entrance examinations for recruitment.
15. As most of the colleges run basic course like BA, B.Sc, B.Com in rural areas the placement of students is therefore very low.
16. Due to poor socio economic condition of students and the region very few outgoing students progress to higher education like UG to PG or PG to M.Phil/PhD/Post Doctoral.
17. Providing guidance for competitive examination and career counseling is a big challenge due to non-

availability of competent faculty/resources. This brings down the number of students passing the competitive examinations.

18. Resource mobilization for research is very difficult for colleges in rural areas as they are ignored by industries and corporate houses.
19. The outcome of student satisfaction survey is also adversely affected due to lack of teachers.
20. The IQAC of these colleges are unable to make any significant contribution for institutionalizing the quality assurance strategies due to lack of basic infrastructure, faculty and other issues mentioned elsewhere.

### Remedial Steps

1. While granting permission to the colleges in rural areas, the government, UGC, Universities offer relaxation about various rule and regulations. But the same sort of relaxation is not provided to such colleges at the time of Assessment and Accreditation by NAAC.
1. The colleges, situated in rural areas where there is unavailability of internet connectivity, should be allowed to manually submit the SSR.
2. The parameters for Assessment and Accreditation for both the rural and urban colleges are same but there should actually be different and somewhat lenient parameters for the Assessment and Accreditation of the former.
3. In innovation ecosystem NAAC states the institution has created an ecosystem for innovation including incubation centre and other initiatives for creation and transfer of knowledge.
4. Regarding the alumni contribution, NAAC states the alumni are a strong support to the institution. Maximum alumni are low salaried, hence cannot contribute to it financially in mobilization of resources. This amount to be another weak area in the assessment process.
5. As per the guideline the scores obtained in the SSS in conducted parallel to the Data Validation and Verification (DVV) and will be part of the overall CGPA. Naturally, the overall performance of such institution in this metrics shall going to below the mark.
6. The fees for the Assessment and Accreditation of rural colleges should be relatively less and affordable.

### Implication of the study

It is a welcome move in parts of NAAC to come out with new regulation and norms related with assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions in the country. To day present world, ICT enabled process; evaluation of the data submitted online, steps have been taken to bring about uniformity in the process of Assessment and Accreditation. However, same yardsticks that seem suitable for the premier institutes like IITs and IIMs may not be appropriate for the colleges running BA, B.Com courses in rural areas. Perhaps, the new system of Assessment by NAAC needs serious looking into considering, the decline in Grades Awarded to the HEIs that have undertaken NAAC Assessment recently following the new procedure of NAAC.

### Conclusion

In a changing educational scenario, it is imperative that new systems of assessment and accreditation are to be undertaken to update and upgrade the HEIS across the country. Nevertheless, the difficulties faced by the HEIs in rural region should not be ignored and they should be supported with continuous and long lasting resources so that they should not trail behind to walk parallel in the larger interest of the nation in the field of higher education.

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