



# National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) Assessing System

**For Prelims:** National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Higher education Institution's (HEIs), Accredited universities, University Grants Commission (UGC), Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings.

**For Mains:** Significance, Issues of Education and Related Initiatives.

## Why in News?

Recently, there was a controversy related to the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) ratings** of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda as the institute's score changed from A to A+ on the back of improvement across parameters.

## What do we Know about NAAC?

### ▪ About:

- It's an **autonomous body under the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#)**, that **assesses and certifies Higher Education Institution's (HEIs)** with gradings as part of accreditation.
- Through a **multi-layered process**, a higher education institution learns whether it meets the standards of quality set by the evaluator in terms of curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research, and other parameters.
- The ratings of institutions **range from A++ to C**. If an institution is graded D, it means it is not accredited.

### ▪ Mission:

- To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;
- To **stimulate the academic environment** for promotion of quality of teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions;
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;
- To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programmes, and
- To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.

### ▪ Process for Accreditation:

- **Input Based:** NAAC relies heavily on self-assessment reports of applicant institutions.
  - The first step is for an applicant **institution to submit a self-study report of information** related to quantitative and qualitative metrics.
  - The data is then **validated by NAAC expert teams**, followed by **peer team visits to the institutions**.

### ▪ Future Perspective:

- **Outcome-based approach:** The NAAC is **planning to adopt an outcome-based approach**, according to it the **emphasis would be given to finding out if students**

are equipped with relevant skills and academic abilities.

## What is the Status of Accredited Institutions in India?

- There are 1,043 universities and 42,343 colleges listed on the portal of the All-India Survey on Higher Education.
- Around 406 universities and 8,686 colleges are NAAC-accredited.
- Among the states, **Maharashtra accounts for the highest number of accredited colleges at 1,869** followed by Karnataka's 914, the second highest.
  - Tamil Nadu has the most **accredited universities** at 43.

| GRADE-WISE   |              |              |              | TOP FIVE STATES (Accredited) |    |               |       |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------|----|---------------|-------|
| Grade        | Universities | Colleges     | Total        | UNIVERSITIES                 |    | COLLEGES      |       |
| A            | 224          | 1,778        | 2,002        | Tamil Nadu                   | 43 | Maharashtra   | 1,834 |
| B            | 165          | 5,831        | 5,996        | Uttar Pradesh                | 37 | Karnataka     | 881   |
| C            | 17           | 1,077        | 1,094        | Maharashtra                  | 35 | Tamil Nadu    | 829   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>406</b>   | <b>8,686</b> | <b>9,092</b> | Karnataka                    | 33 | Uttar Pradesh | 604   |
|              |              |              |              | Rajasthan                    | 31 | Gujarat       | 492   |

## Which Educational Institutes Can Apply for Accreditation?

- Only higher education **institutions that are at least six years old**, or from where **at least two batches of students have graduated**, can apply.
- The accreditation is **valid for five years**.
- Further, Aspiring institutes need to be recognised by the UGC and have regular students enrolled in their full-time teaching and research programmes.

## What is the Present Status of India's Higher education Sector?

- India's higher education system is the **world's third-largest in terms of students**, next to China and the United States.
- India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence.
  - In the prestigious **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2023**, only three Indian Universities- IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IISc (Bangalore)- have been included in the top 200 institutes.

## What are the Challenges in India's Higher Education Sector?

- Enrolment:** The **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** of India in higher education is only 25.2% which is quite low as compared to the developed and other major developing countries.
- Equity:** There is no equity in GER among different sections of society. GER for males (26.3%), females (25.4%), SC (21.8%) and ST (15.9%).
  - There are regional variations too. While some states have high GER some are far behind the national figures.
  - The college density (number of colleges per lakh eligible population) varies from 7 in Bihar to 59 in Telangana as compared to All India average of 28.
  - Most of the premier universities and colleges are centred in metropolitan and urban cities, thereby leading to the **regional disparity** in access to higher education.

- **Quality:** Higher Education in India is plagued with rote learning, lack of employability and skill development due to the low quality of education.
- **Infrastructure:** Poor infrastructure is another challenge to higher education in India. Due to the budget deficit, corruption and lobbying by the vested interest group (Education Mafias), public sector universities in India lack the necessary infrastructure. Even the Private sector is not up to the mark as per the global standard.
- **Faculty:** Faculty shortages and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well-qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Shortage of faculty leads to Ad-hoc expansion even in the premier institutions.
  - The Pupil-to-teacher ratio though has been stable in the country (30:1), however, it needs to be improved to make it comparable to the USA (12.5:1), China (19.5:1) and Brazil (19:1).

## What are the Recent Initiatives taken by the Government in Higher Education?

- **Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP):** This is a five-year vision plan to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education over the next five years (2019-2024).
- **UGC's Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF):** LOCF guidelines, issued by UGC in 2018, aims to specify what graduates are expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of their programme of study. This is to make student active learner and teacher a good facilitator.
- **Graded Autonomy to Universities & Colleges:** Three-tiered graded autonomy regulatory system has been initiated, with the categorization based on accreditation scores. Category I and Category II universities will have significant autonomy to conduct examinations, prescribe evaluation systems and even announce results
- **Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN):** The programme seeks to invite distinguished academicians, entrepreneurs, scientists, experts from premier institutions from across the world, to teach in the higher educational institutions in India.
- **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE):** The main objectives of the survey are to identify & capture all the institutions of higher learning in the country; and collect the data from all the higher education institutions on various aspects of higher education.
- **National Education Policy 2020.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

#### Q. What is the aim of the programme 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'? (2017)

- (a) Achieving 100% literacy by promoting collaboration between voluntary organizations and government's education system and local communities.
- (b) Connecting institutions of higher education with local communities to address development challenges through appropriate technologies.
- (c) Strengthening India's scientific research institutions in order to make India a scientific and technological power.
- (d) Developing human capital by allocating special funds for health care and education of rural and urban poor, and organizing skill development programmes and vocational training for them.

**Ans: (b)**

**Exp:**

- **'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan' was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt with an aim to connect institutions of higher education**, including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs), etc., with local communities to address the development

challenges through appropriate technologies.

- The objectives of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan are broadly two-fold:
  - Building institutional capacity in institutes of higher education in research and training relevant to the needs of rural India.
  - Provide rural India with professional resource support from institutes of higher education, especially those which have acquired academic excellence in the field of science, engineering and technology, and management. **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

**Source: IE**

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