

NAAC ACCREDITATION AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: LIBRARIANS' ROLE BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP

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Assessment and Accreditation has been the instrument for quality assurance, measurement and sustenance in the Higher Education System. Performance of any educational system is measured by its Grade obtained in NAAC or NIRF or NBA and this acts as a motivating factor for student population to attract such institutions of higher learning. In an academic setup, Central Facilities especially Library and Information Centres occupy significance in obtaining better accreditation for its institute. Today Librarianship is an evolving and multi-disciplinary in nature with its rich information sources both print and online sources to support learning, teaching, research and extension activities of the user community in the networked environment. Librarians now play an important role in IQAC and RUSA activities at universities and colleges, serving as Director – IQAC, NAAC Coordinator, RUSA Coordinator, and IT Coordinators. In this context, an attempt has been made to raise awareness of the vital role of librarians in the NAAC process, as well as to explore the inevitability of librarians in NAAC and the pursuit of Quality Excellence in Higher Education. Further, explores the role of librarians in all criteria's of the entire NAAC process and not confining to its Library component 4.2 of Criteria IV just 20 marks, but they can directly or indirectly can definitely play significant role in getting 303 marks plus out of 1000 marks in NAAC process.

Keywords: Total Quality Management, Quality Indicators, Library Performance

PERFORMANCE AND MEASUREMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEM: A NECESSITY

Performance of any country or its state or Educational institutions has a set of defined quality indicators framed by the National Apex Bodies like NITI Aayog, NAAC, NBA, NIRF etc. The states performance in India is measured by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) according to NITI Aayoga's 2020. Today, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) - an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC) "focuses on assessment of the quality of higher education institutions in the country for promotion of quality in teaching-learning

and research in higher education institutions” especially Degree Colleges and Universities in the Country.

Among the seven Criteria’s of NAAC, Criteria four accounts to Infrastructure and Learning Resources, wherein the library is a Central Facility plays significant role in the entire accreditation process. It is needless to mention that Library is a heart of any University or College or institution of higher learning supporting the academic and research activities. Hence, Library evaluation is an important component, and the use of library and information systems is one of the major concerns and an integral part of library and information science practitioners. It is easily recognised as a significant issue, despite the fact that it has been examined or defined in various ways. Obioma (1986) defines evaluation as “the quantitative judgment results from assessment; that is, a value judgment on quantitative data arising from testing and measurement.” During 1930’s, the father of Library Science in India Dr. S.R. Ranganathan has developed *Five Laws of Library Science* (1931) is a classic of library science literature which has greater relevance even today and future as well and these laws acts as guidelines and indicators for evaluation and accreditation process.

Every institution nowadays is very sensitive of the quality dimension and excellence in education, and in this direction, NAAC has devised specific metrics for ongoing improvement of their higher education quality for improved visibility, acceptability, and sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Total Quality Management, Performance measurement of Libraries and evaluation of Library system in the light of various standards like SERVQUAL, Management principles, Five Laws of Library Science etc., has been published in various primary and secondary sources since a long years, but today National Assessment and Accreditation Council has become a guideline or mandatory for the Libraries to achieve in the light of the parameters set out in the NAAC Institutional Accreditation- Manual (October 2020). Specific few significant studies pertaining to NAAC and Libraries reported have been reviewed as under.

Accreditation is a continuous quality improvement programme that ensures standard procedures and functions that a University/ Autonomous College must follow. Patil (2021) studied in detail the guidelines laid down by different governing bodies. The library in each higher educational Institute is a separate department and works on the directives received from the higher management within the Institution and the guidelines prescribed by the Governing bodies. The Library department has to follow certain guideline, norms and standards and regulations given by the Governing bodies, which have been reported in this article. The present article will lay down the different guidelines on which the library should work. Along with these criteria, the library also has to ensure relentless service to its clientele by using the electronic media and its documentation has to be done. Latheef (2019) discussed the need for an academic audit, objectives of the audit, quality

measurements, the actual status of libraries, remedial measures to improve the services of the library in every academic year. Kulkarni (2018) discussed the Librarian's role in the institution's overall NAAC process in light of the revised framework beyond 4.2. The librarian must fulfil two basic roles: first, as a member of the college team, and second, as the Library's leader.

Quality assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes in the accreditation process, evaluation of libraries is an essential component, Library – a central facility which is the knowledge hub for all the departments, students and faculty occupies significance in getting better accreditation to the college attached therein and hence, this study attempts to evaluate the college libraries of North Karnataka covering 110 colleges with respect to the parameters like Library credibility and privileges of College Librarian and extent of use of library services and best practices rendered by

college libraries (Chigateri&Jange, 2017). NAAC visit to the college library should be taken as an opportunity not as a threat. NAAC visit certainly helps to enhance the quality and services of the library (Sidurkar, 2017). This can be inferred from the studies conducted on role of Librarians in NAAC process, which indicates there is a need to explore and discuss the role of librarians beyond Librarianship – Criteria 4.2, as the Librarians role is involved in the entire process of learning, teaching, research and extension activities of NAAC and thus the study discusses to bridge the gap.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (NAAC)

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

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 as an

Metrics	Universities	Autonomous Colleges	Affiliated/ Constituent Colleges	
			UG	PG
Criteria	7	7	7	7
Key Indicators (KIs)	34	34	31	32
Qualitative Metrics (QIM)	36	36	35	36
Quantitative Metrics (QnM)	79	72	58	60
Total Metrics (QIM + QnM)	115	107	93	96

[Source: NAAC Institutional Accreditation - Manual for Self Study Report Universities, October 2020]

autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to ensure that quality assurance is an integral part of the operation of Higher Education Institutions. NAAC has identified the following seven criteria to serve as the basis of its assessment procedures:

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

NAAC Parameters for Library and Information Centres

As a Library professional, keeping in view of better accreditation of College/ University, there is a need to

ensure the optimum score and prepare to meet all the parameters as enunciated by the NAAC. It goes without saying that the establishment of NAAC has improved the image and importance of college and university libraries in India by focusing on the Library. The adequacy and optimal use of an institution's facilities are critical for maintaining the quality of academic and other programmes on campus. The fourth Criteria – "Infrastructure and Learning Resources" has 100 marks, that contains four indicators i.e.

- Physical Facilities (30 marks)
- Library as a Learning Resource (20 marks)
- IT Infrastructure (30 marks)
- Maintenance of Campus Infrastructure (20 marks)

The university or college must prepare the data in advance in terms of formats and data templates in accordance with the NAAC quality indicator framework, which is available in the NAAC Manual.

Key Indicator - 4.2 Libraries as a Learning Resource (20 Marks)

Indicators	Weight age
4.2.1 Library is automated using Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) and has digitization facility	4
4.2.2 Institution has subscription for e-Library resources (e – journals, ebooks, e-ShodhSindhu, Shodhganga and Databases)	6
4.2.3 Average annual expenditure for purchase of books/ e-books and subscription to journals/e-journals during the last five years (INR in Lakhs)	5
4.2.4 Percentage per day usage of library by teachers and students (foot falls and login data for online access) (Data to be provided only for the latest completed academic year)	5

For any College or University, Library is a Central facility considered as Heart of University or College campus and every academician i.e. students, research scholars and faculty members have to make use of library resources to support the academics and research activities, Though Library has very significant in higher educational institutions, unfortunately, only 20 marks are assigned, accounting for only 2% of the total marks of 1000 marks involved in accreditation. Nonetheless, the Library, directly or indirectly, must play a significant role in other criteria as well, and the librarian should keep in mind that even a percentage point plays a significant role in obtaining better accreditation.

Role of Librarians beyond Librarianship in NAAC towards Quality Excellence

Today, the libraries have undergone a sea of change as a result of the impact of information and communication technology, and the curriculum is more inter-disciplinary in nature, with information technology, management skills, and psychological aptitudes being essential and preferred for a career in librarianship. As a result,

the Librarians are multi-skill oriented professionals and they are well placed not only in colleges or universities, but also in foreign embassies like British Council or American Council and also in corporate sectors like Honeywell, Infosys, TCS, Wipro etc.

Doctoral Research work carried out by Chigateri (2018-19) to identify the dynamic role played by college librarians in North Karnataka reported in Table 1. In addition to the regular post of Librarian, they execute the additional responsibility as NSS Coordinator, NAAC Coordinator, In-charge Principal and Member of any Committee of the College effectively. Results found that the respondent college librarians acted as NAAC Coordinator to the extent of 30.9% and 40.9% as In-charge Principal, which is a good sign of dynamism among librarians. Majority of the college librarians are involved as Member of any Committee of the College (92.7%). But still there is a need to undertake responsibility as NSS Coordinator with other roles as well and this will really boost the image building and satisfy the NAAC parameters.

Table 1: Librarian Credentials in Government Colleges in North Karnataka

Librarian Credentials	Frequency	Percentage
a. NSS Coordinator	11	10%
b. NAAC Coordinator	34	30.9%
c. In-charge Principal	45	40.9%
d. Member of any Committee of the College	102	92.7%
e. Earn while you Learn' scheme	4	3.6%

Table 2: Vision and Mission Statement of Government Colleges

Vision Statement		Yes/ No		Total
		Yes	No	
Prior to Year 2000	Count	18	9	27
	Percentage	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
After year 2000	Count	55	28	83
	Percentage	66.3%	33.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	73	37	110
	Percentage	66.4%	33.6%	100.0%
Mission Statement				
Prior to Year 2000	Count	18	9	27
	Percentage	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
After year 2000	Count	55	28	83
	Percentage	66.3%	33.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	73	37	110
	Percentage	66.4%	33.6%	100.0%

The Table 2 shows Vision and Mission Statement of Government Colleges, which is required as per the NAAC parameter. Results found that irrespective of year of establishment of colleges, 66.4% of the colleges have Vision and Mission Statement and thus fulfilling the requirement of NAAC and only 33.6% of them negate the purpose. The role of the library and the librarian in the overall NAAC process, in addition to Parameter 4.2, are discussed below to justify the multidimensional ability of Librarians as Teacher of Teachers and the survival of Librarianship as a viable discipline.

A) Criteria I - Curricular Aspects [150 marks]

Academic Libraries are established to support curriculum needs of the institution by maintaining curriculum of different programs, learning course materials, question bank and its

supporting documents and making it available on the institutional website connected to the Library. As an Academic Council member in the University setup, Member of Board of Studies etc., the Librarian can add weightage of the college or university in supporting the curricular aspects.

- * To keep pace with time and marketing industrial or corporate employability requirements, the curriculum must be revised and updated on a regular basis atleast once in three years, and the Librarian, as an intermediary, must assist the teaching faculty by providing the current trends of development of subjects/ concepts, , rich print and online resources to each department on emerging concepts, laws, and policies of the government (**Metric 1.1.2 – 20 Marks**).

- * The Librarians gained confidence and built morale of their skills that they have a greater role to play as teachers, as per the UGC in its 543rd meeting held on August 9th, 2019 approved two credit courses on “Research and Publication Ethics” [2 credits and 30 hours]. This is mandatory for all PhD students for their course work, regardless of department. The Librarians as regular feature impart Skill Development workshops/ certificate courses in Colleges and Universities (**Metric 1.1.3 – 10 Marks**).
- * The Library should assist students undertaking field projects/research projects/internship programs and assist them with their resources in identifying research problems, literature reviews, and statistical tools. Further, with their strong networking with libraries, should refer students to various universities/research institutes for carrying out Internship, which is an important component of master degree programmes especially in the Department of Library and Information Science (**Metric 1.3.4 – 5 Marks**).
- * The Library should assist in collecting, analysing, and interpreting student feedback in the light of the pre-determined NAAC questionnaires using tools such as Survey Monkey, Google survey tools, and so on, and thereby assisting the institute and NAAC process in collecting, analysing, and interpreting for further improvement in the curriculum and learning outcomes (**Metric 1.4.1 – 20 Marks**).

Inference

As a Academic Council member or Librarian in different capacities. The Librarian must be proactive in assisting the faculty of various departments with its extensive resources and innovative practices developing faculty-librarian collaboration can support and **contribute 55 Marks in Criteria I - Curricular Aspects rather than** thinking. am I connected ?

B) Criteria II - Teaching, Learning and Evaluation [200 marks for universities/ 350 for Colleges]

- * Libraries with its rich print and online information sources, primarily books, journals, reference sources, and e-resources under Eshodhsindhu consortia/ NLIST, citation databases and annual reviews and reports, assist students, research scholars, and faculty members in their learning, teaching, and research activities. Teachers should use ICT-enabled tools, including online resources, for effective teaching and research, which are primarily facilitated by the University Grants Commission and free national resources, and the Library should assist and make these online resources accessible and the libraries should strive in developing Institutional repositories in preserving the courseware's and less plans of the faculty and makes them available to the student's community under network environment. The Learning Management systems (Moodle or Quiklearn etc.) and online teaching tools like Zoom Classroom (<https://zoom.us/>), Microsoft Teams (<https://teams.microsoft.com/start>) be promoted and

implemented in the educational system (**Metric 2.3.2 – 6 Marks**).

- * As a Librarian on par with Teachers can support Metric 2.4.4 in getting awards, recognition, fellowships at the State, National, International level from Government/Govt. recognised bodies through their innovation librarianship (**Metric 2.4.4 – 10 Marks**).
- * The library has a centralised membership database of users, enrolled students, and scholars that include fields such as name, class, gender, ID, mobile, and email, and this data should be shared with NAAC for online submission. and can play significant role in Student Satisfaction Survey regarding the teaching-learning process (**Metric 2.7.1 – 30 Marks**).

Inference

*In the Criteria II - Teaching, Learning and Evaluation, the Librarian being integral part of information system can support and contribute **46 Marks**.*

C) Criteria III - Research, Innovations and Extension [250 marks for Universities/ 110 for Colleges]

Today, the Librarians serving in Colleges or Universities have been playing significant role in Research Support services and they have started a separate wing as “Research Support Unit”.

- * The Central Library facilitates Institution’s Research facilities to support academic and research community and has to develop a well-defined policy for promotion of research in the form of Library manual, Library Guides,

Research Support Policy (**Metric 3.1.1 – 2 Marks**).

- * The Library has been subscribing to various Research/Statistical Databases like Indiastat.com, EPWRF Database, CMIE and research databases from Emerald, JGATE, EBSCO etc., and reference management tools like Mendeley result in supporting **Metric 3.1.5 for 3 Marks**.
- * The Library should also initiate Grants for research projects sponsored by government agencies and let us not think, it is only for teaching faculty. For instance, Gulbarga University Library, Kalaburagi has received two projects from Govt. of Karnataka i.e. a) Ministry of Human Resources, Skill development and Organic Agriculture, (Govt. of Karnataka) - ICT Smart E-Content and Technology Rs. 98 Lakh (2021) and b) Kalyan Karnataka region Development Board, Govt. of Karnataka – Green Library with RFID Rs. 53 lakh (2019-2020)(**Metric 3.2.2 – 10 Marks**).
- * There is always scope for organizing workshops/ seminars on Research methodology, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Skill development programmes by the Library with its research bent of mind (**Metric 3.3.2 – 10 Marks**).
- * In Key Indicators - 3.4 Research Publications and Awards (100), the Librarian especially in the University setup can play very important role. Code of Ethics for research in Code of Ethics for research and Code of Ethics for research and also contributing its PhD Thesis

to Shodhganga, INFLIBNET centre are added advantages for librarian to get more marks in this criterion. Today, the main task of libraries is to ensure the quality of research articles and PhD theses, for which they perform plagiarism testing. As a result, a plagiarism policy must be developed by the librarian as a research document, as it is required for students pursuing M.Phil. and PhD degrees in various departments of the university to check the originality of research work before it is submitted. **(Metric 3.4.1– 5 Marks).**

- * Its responsibility of Librarian to assist and guide faculty in the development of e-content for e-PG-Pathshala, CEC (Under Graduate), SWAYAM, MOOCs platform, NPTEL/ NMEICT/any other Government Initiatives, and Institutional LMS **(Metric 3.4.7– 10 Marks).**
- * The new area of research which has influenced scientific publishing industry is Scientometrics and the Library professionals are dominant in utilizing techniques and skills of Scientometrics. They should compile average Citation Index in Scopus/Web of Science/PubMed Data Requirements of teaching faculty and also identify the university's h-Index based on Scopus/Web of Science – h-Index of the University and also prepare a list of UGC CARE journals approved by the University Grants Commission and educate the academic community and promote the research culture to publish in the journals. Research Information Management System portraying scholarly output of the university or college, which is developed by INFLIBNET

is IRINS. The Libraries can take a lead in establishing Scientific Research Kundali through IRINS ex: Gulbarga University (irins.org) **(Metric 3.4.8 & 3.4.9– 30 Marks).**

- * Functional MoUs with institutions/ industries have to be developed for sharing not only information resources but also for technical expertise and also assist students especially Library and information science for their Internships or Project work **(Metric 3.7.2– 10 Marks)**

Inference

Criteria III - Research, Innovations and Extension is a blessing for Librarians as they have specialised skills in supporting this criterion and *can support and contribute 80 Marks.*

D) Criteria IV- Infrastructure and Learning Resources [100 marks]

* The Library, as the central hub of knowledge, should create need-based collections that are well organized and well-maintained, with appropriate retrieval tools. The debate becomes relevant only when the library is centrally appealing and receives user appreciation for its active role and positive attitude **(Key Indicator - 4.2 Library as a LRC – 20 Marks).**

* The Library should make concerted efforts to make the library a “Happening Place” on campus and a one-stop shop for acquiring needed information, with cutting-edge ICT facilities for e-information access in a network environment using a minimum of 1GBPS (NMEICT) leased line connectivity. The Library with its Journalism slant can facilitate for e-content development **(Metric 4.3.2& 4.3.5– 10 Marks)**

Inference

The Library can ensure to obtain 30 marks in these criteria 4 having edge over its own library system and networking capabilities.

E) Criteria V- Student Support and Progression [100 Marks]

- * The library should assist students in developing competitive skills to enable them to clear competitive exams such as UGC-NET, JRF, banking, insurance, railway, IAS, KAS, IPS etc., and build separate collections within the library, preferably naming it 'Competitive Examination and Information Resource Centre.'. Today, resources for competitive examinations are made available in mobile apps, and there are also free mobile apps available for use. Students must be oriented to these resources like National Digital Library of India (NDLI), Esarvajanika Granthalaya (Govt. of Karnataka, Department of Public Libraries) etc. **(Metric 5.1.2– 10 Marks)**
- * The library should initiate innovative best practises such as Best User Award, motivational means of promoting reading habits, exhibitions on various occasions such as Librarians Day, Teacher's Day, Women's Day, National occasions, and cultural and sports events for users. and also Capacity development and skills enhancement initiatives on soft skills, communication skills and trends in technology **(Metric 5.1.3– 5 Marks)**
- * The Alumni Association/Chapters can be initiated for its own department and also its

instate to support for getting score of 10 marks **(Metric 5.4.1 & 5.4.2– 10 Marks)**

Inference

The Library can ensure to obtain 25 marks in these criterion 5 having edge over its user needs, perception and progression.

F) Criteria VI - Governance, Leadership and Management [100 marks]

- * As an Academic Council Member, IQAC Coordinator, NAAC Coordinator, IT Coordinator, and Statutory Officer, the Library and its staff should demonstrate exceptional leadership and contribute to the achievement of institutional vision. The Librarian should accept the additional responsibility entrusted to him or her in addition to the routine duties and should never regard it as a burden. **(Metric 6.1.1 & 6.5.2– 15 Marks)**

G) Criteria VII- Institutional Values and Best Practices [100 marks]

- * The library, particularly in a university setting, has a large and independent building structure that can support green initiatives on campus by replacing tubes/bulbs with LED bulbs or installing a solar system and going for rain water harvesting. **(Metric 7.1.2– 5 Marks).**
- * Open Air Green Library has been one of the innovations by librarians to facilitate open air reading with wi-fi facility so also e-attendance and social responsibility of librarians to support its affiliated college libraries and rural libraries of Gram Panchayat libraries. **(Metric 7.1.5– 4 Marks).**

- * Provision for Physically challenged students, research scholars and faculty members, the library should facilitate Braille facilities, provision for lifts, Ramps, Rest Rooms, Scribes for examination (**Metric 7.1.7– 4 Marks**).
- * User Sensitization and workshops especially in the University Library setup is common due to diversity of print and online resources and research support tools. Sensitization of students and employees of the Institution to the constitutional obligations and prescribed code of conduct for students, teachers, administrators and other staff and conducts periodic programmes has to be taken up by librarians in this regard (**Metric 7.1.9 & 7.1.10 – 9 Marks**).
- * Inbuilt Smart e-Attendance system for library staff and user community can act as Innovative best practices and the Librarian should ensure its impact on users and then it can be included as one of the best practices of the institution in Metric 7.2.1 (**Metric 7.2.1– 30 Marks**).

Inference

With the skilled librarianship, passion for better service, visibility and positivity, the librarian can contribute and acquire 52 marks in Criterion VII for Institutional Values and Best Practices to its institute of eminence.

CONCLUSION

Today the academic libraries are not mere possessor of information but a information scientist with plenty of information sources both in print and online sources to support learning, teaching, research and extension activities of the

user community. There has always been debate about the role of librarians in the college or university environment, and there is no doubt that that we the libraries are indispensable in the learning, teaching, and research processes. The visibility cannot be demanded but we should innovate the library activities, services and involvement in NAAC and let us do not confine to just Key Indicator - 4.2 Libraries as a Learning Resource (20), but also to play significant role in other criteria's of NAAC. To conclude, the Librarians play significant role in the entire NAAC process directly or indirectly can definitely contribute to get 303 marks plus out of 1000 marks in NAAC process.

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