

**[ORIGINAL REPORT]****National Assessment and Accreditation Council: Awareness & Perception of Physiotherapy Faculty**Choudhary Avi<sup>1</sup>, Kaushik Himani<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Senior Assistant Professor, <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Physiotherapy, Delhi.**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** In India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body under the University Grant Commission (UGC), ensuring continuous quality improvement and quality assurance in higher education institutions. Despite facing challenges, many institutes in India seek accreditation from NAAC. Given the growing field of physiotherapy education in India, it is crucial to evaluate the awareness and perception of faculty members working in physiotherapy colleges about NAAC accreditation.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional E-survey study was conducted using a purposive snowball sampling method for physiotherapy faculty members practising within Indian Physiotherapy Colleges or universities, irrespective of whether their institutes were NAAC accredited or not included in this study.

**Results:** the survey found that 75% of respondents were from Delhi NCR while only 25% were from outside Delhi, with half having 5-10 years of experience. Only 25% worked at NAAC-accredited institutes, although all recognised the accreditation process's significance. They understood the steps for accreditation; key challenges included data collection, limited resources, and infrastructure. Overall, faculty awareness of NAAC accreditation's importance is excellent, highlighting a need to ease the evaluation process.

**Conclusions:** The study revealed that physiotherapy faculties recognise the importance of NAAC accreditation in improving institute quality and are well-informed about its benefits and challenges.

**Keywords:** NAAC, Physiotherapy, Perception, Accreditation, Faculty, Education

**Introduction**

Accreditation and regulatory bodies are designed to ensure the quality of higher education institutions (HEIs).<sup>[1]</sup> There is an inherent belief that accreditation ensures the quality of educational institutes. However, no evidence guarantees that accreditation maintains or improves the quality<sup>[1,2]</sup>. In India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body under the University Grant Commission (UGC), which works for the HEIs' continuous quality improvement (CQI) and quality assurance (QA)<sup>[3,4]</sup>. This accreditation process rules quantitative and qualitative metrics, focusing on educational processes such as curricular aspects, teaching, learning processes, training,

research and innovation, Library and infrastructure resources, feedback from stakeholders, and maintaining good governance and leadership<sup>[3,4]</sup>.

In the context of Indian physiotherapy colleges, there is no single regulatory body providing nationwide guidelines for running education institutes or physiotherapy practices, leading to variations in the curricular aspects of physiotherapy education. However, In India, NAAC is one of the most common bodies that works to maintain the standards and promote the quality improvement (QI) of all the Indian HEIs. NAAC provides accreditation to universities and institutes with a platform to continuously evaluate their performance for QA in regular periods of intervals<sup>[3,4]</sup>. Whereas, many

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institutes in India still face challenges when applying for accreditation of NAAC<sup>[5]</sup>. Physiotherapy education is a growing field in the current era, responsive to changing healthcare and suicide needs in India. Therefore, the study aimed to evaluate the awareness and perception of faculty members working in physiotherapy colleges about the NAAC accreditation.

**Methods**

This cross-sectional E-survey study was conducted to evaluate the awareness and perception of faculty members working in Indian physiotherapy colleges regarding the NAAC accreditation process. A purposive snowball sampling method was employed to ensure the inclusion of a diverse set of participants. Faculty members from both NAAC-accredited and non-accredited physiotherapy colleges or universities were invited to participate. It is noteworthy that participants from non-accredited institutions were included based on their active involvement in the preparatory phases of the NAAC accreditation process. This decision was made to gather perspectives from faculty members across various stages of engagement, allowing for a holistic understanding of awareness, perceptions, and challenges related to NAAC compliance and standards,

The E-survey form was designed based on the principal investigator, drawing from experience and previous studies with NAAC processes to ensure content relevance and clarity. This form was shared via social media platforms and e-mails to the participants. The informed consent form was obtained from the participants individually and they were delighted with the study's objectives. The respondents took 10-15 minutes to fill out the form.

This E-survey form comprises Section I: Demographic information, Section II: Awareness of NAAC, III: Perception of NAAC, and IV: Recommendation for NAAC.

**Results**

Out of all the participants, 75% were the Assistant

professor while 25% were the Associate Professor. Taking about the location of the Institute, 75% were from Delhi NCR, while only 25% were from outside Delhi, as depicted in Figures 1 & 2 and Table 1. Approximately 50% of the participants had academic experience of 5–10 Years and participants were equally distributed among Colleges and Universities.

Only 25% were from the NAAC Accredited Colleges/Universities but 100% of them were aware of the NAAC accreditation process. 75% believe that NAAC is very important for maintaining the quality of higher education, while only 25% think it is important. Although 100% of the Faculty Members believe that it is important to have the NAAC accreditation for maintaining the quality of higher education and were aware of the validity of NAAC accreditation, only 75 % were aware of the basic understanding of correct steps for getting NAAC accreditation as shown in Fig 6.

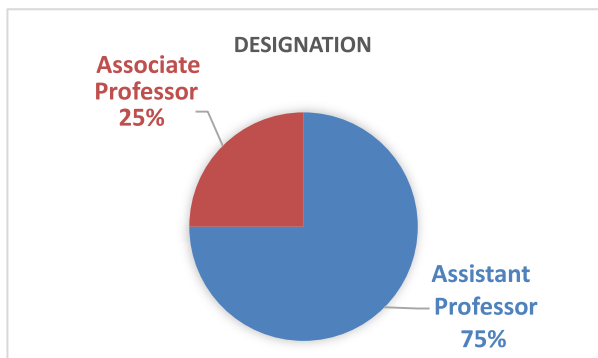
Talking about the challenges faced by the Institutes/Universities, almost all of the participants believed that Data Collection and Analysis is the most challenging task when it comes to the process of NAAC Accreditation, while 50% believe that Limited Resources, Lack of Institutional Experience, Infrastructure and other facilities, Curriculum Guidelines, Research Publications and other NAAC Guidelines as depicted in Fig 7.

50% of Participants believed that NAAC Criteria is Fair and Transparent while the rest were not sure about its transparency. Talking about the rating of NAAC performance in assessing Higher education, 75 % believed that it is excellent and the rest 25 % thought that it is Good.

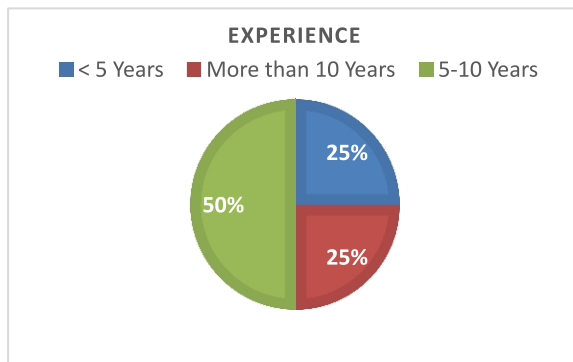
When enquired about the specific process they would like to change, participants suggested that the NAAC accreditation process should involve students, alumni, employers, and industry experts in the assessment process. It should provide detailed feedback reports to institutions and make assessment criteria publicly available, and the process of NAAC accreditation needs to be eased out.

**Table 1:** Demographics of the Participants

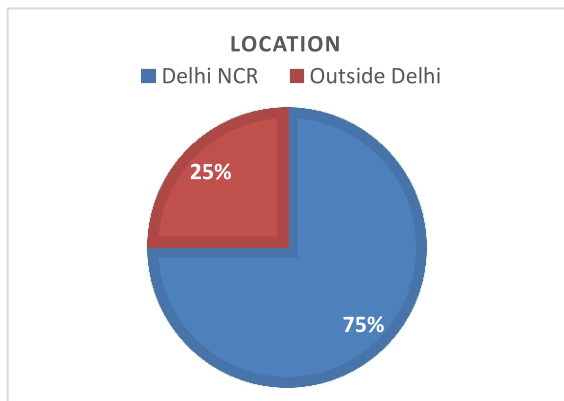
Demographics			
Designation	Assistant Professor		Associate Professor
	75 %		25 %
Location	Delhi NCR		Outside Delhi
	75 %		25 %
Experience	Less than 5 Years	5-10 Years	More than 10 Years
	25 %	50 %	25 %
	College		University
Type of Institution	50 %		50 %



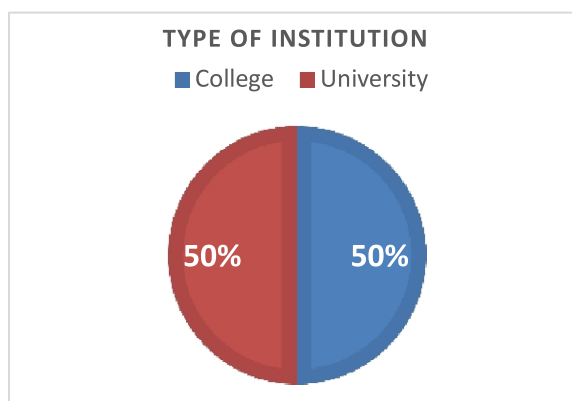
**Graph 1:** Designation of the Participants



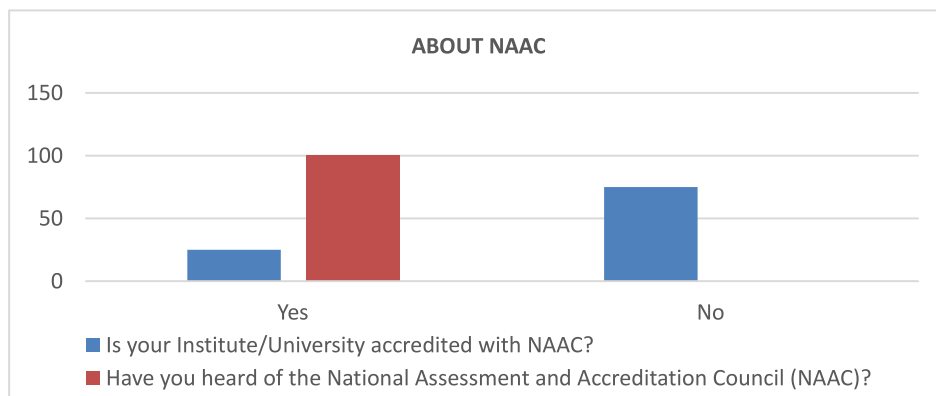
**Graph 3:** Experience of the Participants



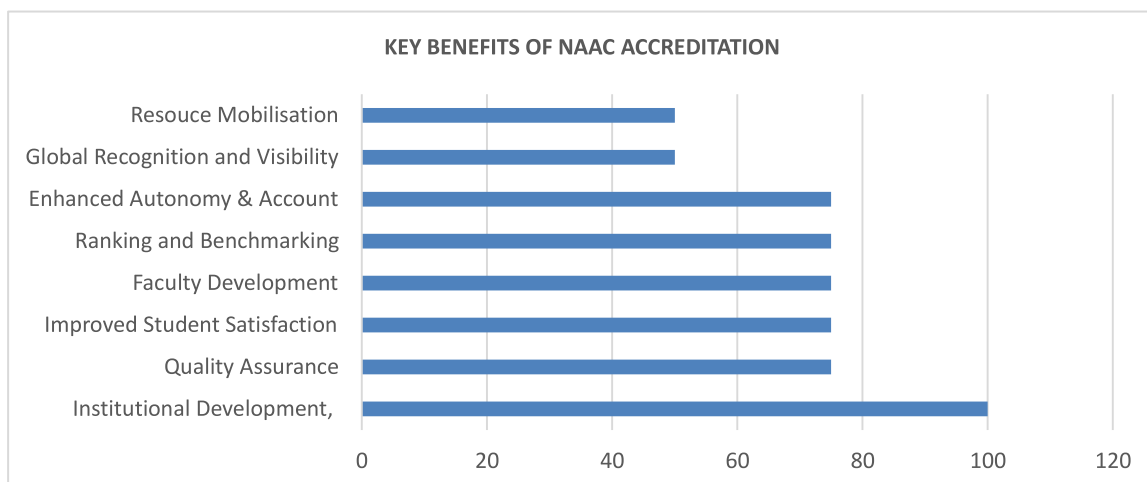
**Graph 2:** Location of the Participants



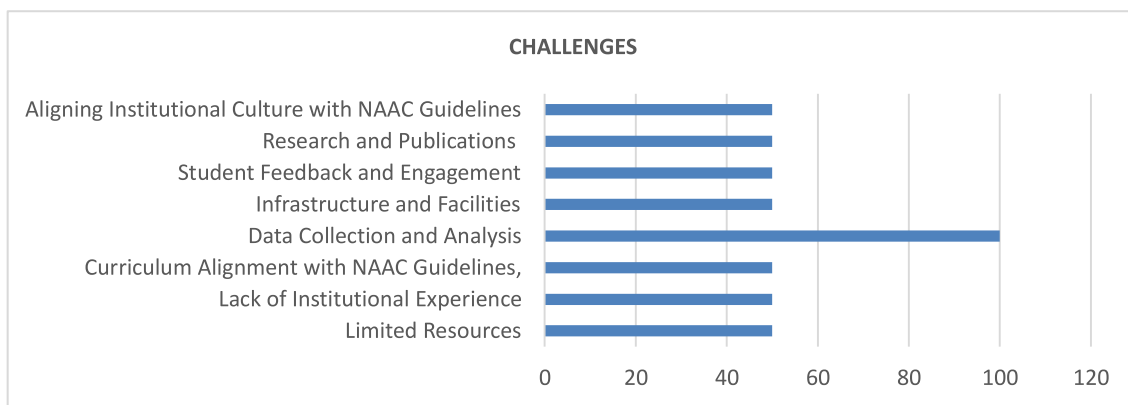
**Graph 4:** Type of the Institution of the Participants



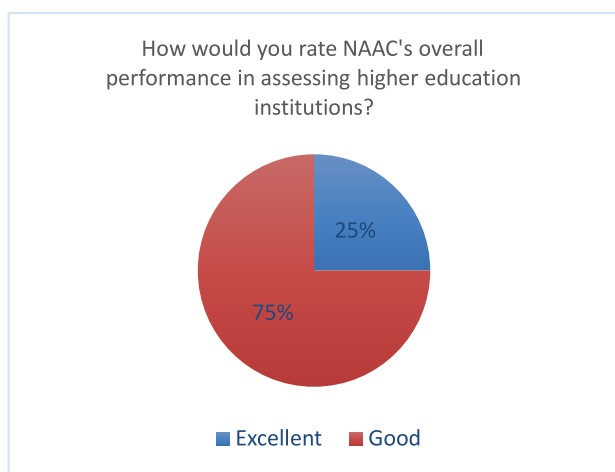
**Graph 5:** Awareness and Accreditation Status



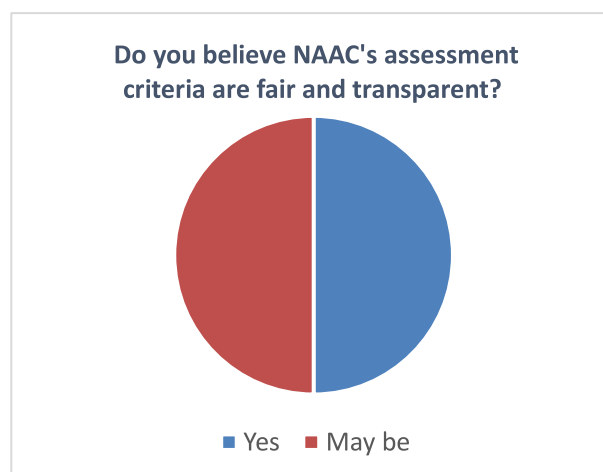
**Graph 6:** Key benefits of NAAC Accreditation



**Graph 7:** Challenges Faced in the Process of NAAC Accreditation



**Graph 8 (a):** NAAC Overall Performance



**Graph 8 (b):** Fairness of Assessment Criteria of NAAC

**Discussion**

The major goal of NAAC accreditation is to improve the quality of teaching-learning and education processes in higher education institutes. It sets the standards for the institutes and assesses the performance of the HEIs if they qualify for accreditation including the medical and paramedical colleges<sup>[6,7,8]</sup>. Health colleges help provide a good future for healthcare providers by providing all the facilities by fulfilling all the needs and expectations of the public and it will evolve with the system<sup>[6,7,8]</sup>. The NAAC gives the basic idea of minimum important requirements that each HEI should include or provide<sup>9</sup>. Academic activities of the HEIs are evaluated against pre-established standards by trained peer reviewers. Faculty members and administrative staff are the major part of this process and students are also an indirect part of this process. Therefore, the study aimed to evaluate the awareness and perception of faculty members working in physiotherapy colleges about the NAAC accreditation. Our study examined the awareness and perception of the personnel involved or not

involved in the NAAC process in the Indian Physiotherapy Colleges. The findings of the study showed that 25% of respondents worked with the NAAC-accredited colleges/universities. 50% of them have experience of more than 5 years and working outside the Delhi NCR.

100% of participants heard about the NAAC and were able to understand its main goals. Of the total 75% of respondents think that NAAC is important for HEIs and they also know the correct process of getting NAAC process. As suggested in previous studies NAAC process is important for so many reasons results also support benefits like global recognition and visibility, resource mobilization, enhanced autonomy and account, ranking and benchmarking, faculty development, improved student satisfaction, quality assurance, and institutional development<sup>[10]</sup>.

In India, studies also suggested that medical or paramedical HEIs faced challenges while applying for NAAC accreditation in support of those results our findings also suggested a few challenges such as data collection and analysis, curriculum alignment

with NAAC guidelines (emerging new strategies), limited resources, research and publications, feedback, infrastructure, student and research related facilities, and lack of institutional expert<sup>[11,12,13,14]</sup>. Whereas, 75% of respondents suggested that NAAC is an excellent tool for assessing the performance and quality of HEI standards.

Some future recommendations were also suggested to involve students, alumni, employers, and industry experts in the assessment process. Provide detailed feedback reports to institutions and make assessment criteria publicly available.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the physiotherapy faculty members' perceptions suggested that NAAC is a very important process that ensures the quality of higher education institutes. The process assesses all the activities conducted in the institute and the facilities provided, setting minimum standards for maintaining quality. The physiotherapy faculties responded that they are aware of NAAC and its significance in improving the quality of the institute and also well-informed regarding its many benefits, even though they were aware of its challenges.

### Declaration

### Funding

None

### Conflict of interest

NA

**Ethical approval:** Ethical review and approval were not required for the study on human participants under local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their informed consent to participate in this study.

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