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COMPARING THE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ACCREDITATION PARAMETERS OF INDIA WITH OTHER GLOBAL ACCREDITATION AGENCIES

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ABSTRACT:

In the universal economic integration, the quality aspect has become one of the most significant factors for the success and survival of organizations. Thus, it can be stated that, quality is one of the most significant strategies to be followed by the educational institutions in India, as it determines the efficiency of educational institutions and the quality of life of the members of society. Assessment and Accreditation (AA) as an External Quality Assurance (EQA)

mechanism for higher education which is emerged as the most widely accepted and adopted methodology throughout the world. Analyzing the quality assurance parameters will enable the educational institutions improve their system of education, to meet the Global Standards. Depending up on the requirement of the unique contexts of their nation, different countries have developed quality assurance models for their education systems. The two main accreditation agencies, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), undertake the instructional evaluation and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), evaluates the technical institutions & professional programs in India. The NBA, India has become the permanent signatory member of the Washington Accord on 13th June 2014, and it adapted Two-Tire Outcome Based accreditation process and student centric approach for the technical education programmes. This paper compares the Quality Accreditation Parameters highlighted by NBA with other global accreditation agencies and the study focuses on the Educational Quality Improvement schemes in India and its requirements to meet the quality assurance in the higher education scenario.

KEYWORDS: Quality, Higher Education, Accreditation Agencies, Parameters.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. History of Quality analysis of higher educational institutes in India

The Indian Education system is the largest in the world and has adopted its quality analysis roots from the British at the time of independence in 1947 (Dahlgaard, Khanji & Kristensen, 2008). A number of

quality control and education assessment units had been established in India like the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) (1925), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) (1945), University Grants Commission (UGC), (1956), National Policy on Education (1986), etc. so that quality education could be provided to the learners and deterioration in the provision of higher education could be analyzed. In addition to this, the

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) had been established in the year 1994 to make improvements in the provision of quality of education in higher educational institutes in India (Goel, 2006). In addition to this, the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) was established in the year 1994 by AICTE under section 10(u) of AICTE act, to carry out the assessment procedures related to the provision of quality education in technical institutes

in India. The NBA helped in providing a balanced learning experience to the students by making emphasis on the academic as well as professional needs of the students. Further, Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) was developed which assessed the quality management in education (Wergin, 2005). It provided integrated programs by collaborating academic learning to the corporate world which developed overall personality of the students.

1.2. Need for Quality Accreditation in Educational Institutions

Accreditation in Educational Institutions is the process through which an agency or association is linked with the educational institutions so that the education and learning provided by them could be assessed and evaluated (Wagner, Hassanein & Head, 2008). The agency analyzes and checks whether the standard of education provided in various educational institutions is as per the guidelines and standards set by various accreditation organizations like AICTE, UCC etc. In India, the awareness about education and learning increased over the years. As per the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) report in 2011, the number of universities has reached 504 in 2009 to 27 in 1950. An increase in the number of institutions in at Central and State level could be seen, with 42 universities at Central level, 243 at State levels, 53 at State Private levels, 130 Deemed and 33 Institutions of National importance. The number of colleges has reached to 30,000 in 2011 from 578 in 1950. The increase in the number of educational institutes has increased the role of accreditation agencies (Vikas, 2012). These units examine the standard the teaching levels in educational institutions so that quality education could be provided to the learners. This will help the students to ascertain institutions for enrollment purpose and determine the acceptability points for credit transfer.

1.3. Role of Accreditation in attaining excellence in Education

The accreditation agencies like, AICTE has introduced courses, curricula, facilities, etc, grant approvals, workshops like MDP, FDPs so the students could be provided academic learning with industry exposure (Sinha & Subramanian, 2013). Cross-functional learning, training, and research in engineering, technology, student mentoring, etc. have been enforced by the AICTE in the teaching process of higher education institutions, so that quality education could be imparted to the students. Because of this, the performance of the students has improved and improved in grades by approximately 20%-23%. Apart from this, criteria based assessment has been introduced to revise and resolve the issues related to the curriculum, teaching-learning evaluation, research, innovations, infrastructure, etc, to improve the quality of education (Scott, 2005). Further, the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) carries out evaluations for the provision of accreditation. It conducts Institution's Programmes for assessments (approved by the Council) at the interval of every six years. It also provides feedback information to the various institutions, universities and higher education organizations, so that improvement in the quality of education could be done. This has helped the educational institutions to provide transparent and high-quality education due to which the enrollment in institutes likes Technical Institute of Advanced Studies (Delhi), Ballari Institute of Technology & Management (Karnataka) etc. has seen increased by about 15%-18% (Schwarz & Westerheijden, 2004).

1.4. Accreditation Agencies in India

In order to assess the quality of education imparted in higher educational institutions in India, NAAC has introduced Revised Assessment and Accreditation Framework in 2017 so that transparent, scalable and robust learning atmosphere could be developed for students. In addition to this, System Generated Scores (SGS) has been introduced through which the online assessment (70%) and peer judgment (30%) could be done in an adequate manner which has increased the learning abilities and helped them to score well (Sarrico, Rosa, Teixeira & Cardoso, 2010). In addition to this, UGC has taken initiatives of promoting and coordinating education in universities, ascertain minimum standards of teaching, determining examination and research activities in universities, framing regulations and carrying out monitoring activities related to the provision of the minimum standard of education, providing grants to higher educational institutions and colleges, etc. Additionally, UGC has established

an autonomous body under section 12 (c) of its Act in 1994 to monitor educational standards in universities and colleges (Razi-Ur-Rahim, 2010). All these provisions laid down by UGC helped in the improvement of the Indian education system in an adequate manner.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Quality Assessment in Higher Education

According to Mishra, (2007), to carry out quality assessment in higher education in India an autonomous body National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) had been established by University Grants Commission (UGC). The NAAC is responsible for introducing "Quality Measure" so that an incessant procedure of evaluation of the educational performance of the HEIs could be done. It also provides opportunities to institutes to carry out self-evaluation procedure so they self-regulatory procedures could be implemented in the working of the HEIs. In addition to this, RashtriyaUchchatarShikshaAbhiyaan (RUSA) had been established in the year 2013 to introduce quality reforms could be brought in the educational system prevailing in the country. It is also responsible for providing adequate funds to the HEIs in case of need. It invigilates the functioning of various HEIs and monitors their working as per the prescribed directives and regulations. It validates and checks the standard of teaching and education assures mandatory quality accreditation to the HEIs.

As per Kumar, (2013) point of views, the All India Council for Technical Education had been established in 1945 to ensure that the proper well developed and co-ordinated education structure of technical education is followed in the country. It also ascertains that qualitative improvement in done in the provision of education so that the levels of education could be raised and standardization could be brought across the country. For this, it has established bureaus like e-Governance (e-Gov), approval (AB), planning and coordination (PC), etc. so that the support could be provided to institutes and quality of education could be enhanced. In addition to this, AIU (Association of Indian Universities) had been established in 1925, so that evaluation of the course, syllabus, and standard of education in various universities and colleges could be done. It also provides a credit of foreign universities that are followed abroad and establishes a correlation between the courses that are provided by the universities in India. Further many other institutes like Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), etc, are there to assess the quality of higher education in India.

2.2. Assessment tools used in the accreditation

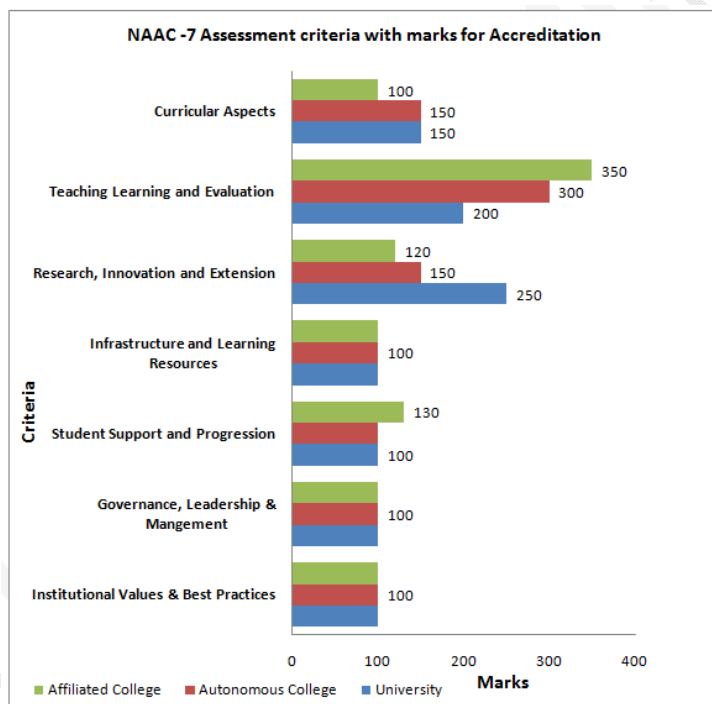
According to Mane, (2007), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) had laid out a quality assurance framework which carries out three prominent functionalities of NAAC that are accreditation, assessment and academic audit. Apart from this, a unit of assessment had also been established so that the operations like inter-disciplinary activities, funding associations, sustainability measures, public consciousness about quality, etc. could be carried out in an adequate manner. The conduction of such activities had improved the working of the higher educational institutions significantly. For example, All India Shri Shivaji Memorial Society's Institutes of Information Technology (AICTE, NAAC accredited) in Maharashtra, had introduced a rewarding system like Best Teacher, 100% University Result, Subject Topper, etc. for teacher and students so that their performance could be enhanced significantly. Because of these initiations, the performance of the teachers increased, and the results of the institution improved by approximately 18% -20%.

As per Johnson & Christensen, (2008) point of views, in order to enhance the quality of education and exercise control over the functioning of the higher educational institutions All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has established bureaus and 10 Board of Studies so that monitoring of the various higher educational institutions could be done adequately. In addition to this, multidiscipline technical officer and staff of the Council had been established to govern the functioning of institutes that lie under the accreditation of AICTE. For example, Institute of Engineering and Technology, Bhabha Technical Campus (AICTE, NAAC accredited) in Punjab had introduced multimedia and internet resources in the teaching practices so that the teaching abilities of teachers could be enhanced and students could learn in a more innovative manner. In addition to this, awareness

workshop, national seminars, conferences etc. are conducted within the institution increasing the learning abilities of the students significantly. Because of the performance of the students has improved and shown better results than previous years.

2.3. The NAAC and the NBA

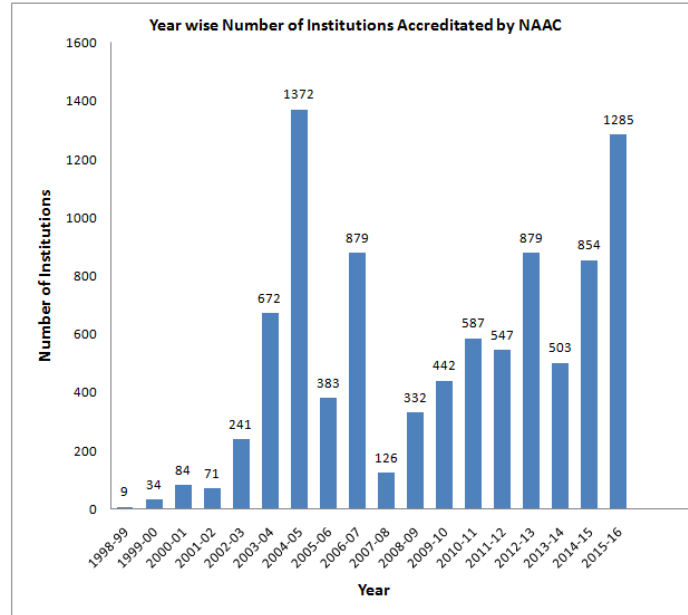
As per Iannuzzi, (2000), the NAAC was responsible for assessing and ensuring quality education in the higher education institutions in India. It helped the HEIs to ascertain their strengths, lacking opportunities and threats. It initiated programmes like NAAC Distance Education Council joint venture so that the accreditation could be provided to the Universities that are providing open and correspondence courses. This help in spreading education and learning to the large population in India and made it available to the learners residing in remote and rural areas. It also helped the HEIs to conduct intra-institutional and inter-institutional interactive activities, so that the students could be provided with academic as well as industrial exposure.



Source: <http://www.naac.gov.in/assessment-accreditation>

Figure 1: NAAC Accreditation Criteria

The initiatives like NAAC-NCTE joint action plans, the formation of National Consultative Committees, the formation of National Qualifications framework, etc. had been done to assess the teachers' appraisal, accredit different disciplines, increase interaction with industry, etc. This had helped in revolutionizing the traditional educational structure that was practiced in the HEIs previously. The educational system has become more organized, regularized and standardized than before helping students to learn in a more effective manner.



Source: NAAC Annual Report 2015-16

Figure 2: Year wise no. of Institutions accredited by NAAC

As per Hasan, Ilias, Rahman & Razak, (2009) point of views, NBA has brought significant improvements in the institutions to which it has provided accreditation. It helped in introducing innovative and modern teaching methods like the use of digital resources like e-learning classes, digital boards, etc. and changed the old pedagogy methods. It provided a sense of direction and identity to the institutions. It also helped in establishing the name, reputation, image, and authenticity in the society by providing them a quality seal label for the prestigious NBA organization. In addition to this, NBA had also established an online portal which provides all the information about the various HEIs, universities, and colleges registered under it. Because of this, the students were able to distinguish and identify valid universities and forged universities and could enroll in universities accordingly. The provision of facilities like date-base expertise, post-accreditation review, quality sustenance, etc. helped in enhancing the education levels in various universities.

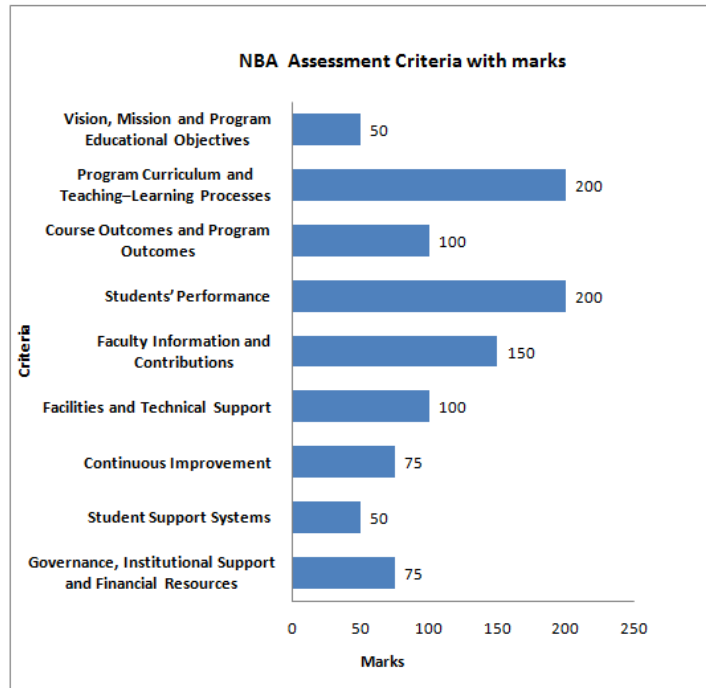
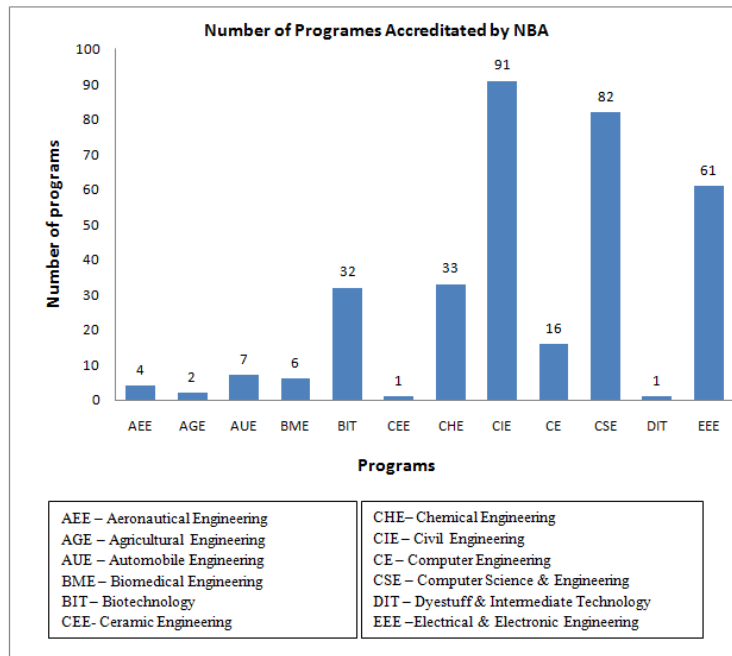


Figure 3: NBA Accreditation Criteria

NBA accredited Engineering and Technology (Tier 1) programs under Washington Accord (Figure 4)



Source: <http://www.nbaind.org>

Figure 4: NBA Accredited Programs

2.4. Comparison of Accreditation parameters of NBA with other global accreditation agencies

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) had been established by UGC with a motive to assess and accredit higher learning in the universities, colleges, and educational institutions. The NAAC assesses and provides accreditation for a period of five years (Onsman, 2010). It is similar to the external assessment that is carried out in Dutch Universities and Association of Universities in the Netherlands.

Table 1: Comparing the Assessment Parameters of various Accreditation Agencies

Sl. No	Accreditation Agency	Input / Resources	Process Management /	Assessment/ Evaluation	Outcomes
1	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students Program educational objectives Faculty Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous Improvement Institutional Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance evaluation of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Outcomes
2	Association for engineering Education of Russia (AEER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program educational objectives Faculty Programme resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme content Educational process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examination System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional qualification Graduates
3	Engineering Council, United Kingdom (ENGC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human, physical and material resources Entry to the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching & Learning Process internal regulations & progression Implementation of previous accreditation recommendations and requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment strategies Professional registration of staff Quality assurance arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning outcomes of the programme
4	Engineers Ireland (EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings, Laboratories and Equipment Academic staff Support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of Student performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme outcomes
5	The National Board of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Educational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission and Vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme Outcomes

	Accreditation (NBA), India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives Faculty Contributions Facilities and Technical Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> statement Curriculum Teaching Learning Process Governance, Institutional Support and Financial Resources Continuous Improvement 		
6	The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure and Learning Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curricular Aspects Teaching-Learning process Research, Innovations and Extension Governance, Leadership and Management Institutional Values and Best Practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Process and Reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Support and Progression Student Performance and Learning Outcomes
7	Engineers Australia (EA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding, facilities and physical resources Academic and support staff profile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach to program and curriculum design Program structure and implementation framework Program curriculum Program structure and implementation framework Management of the student profile Development of the education specification for the program Organisational structure and commitment to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with external stakeholders Feedback and stakeholder input to continuous improvement processes Processes for setting and reviewing the educational outcomes specification Approach to assessment and performance evaluation Management of alternative implementation pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specification of educational outcomes.

			<p>engineering education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with professional practice • Academic leadership and educational culture 	<p>and delivery modes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval processes for program development and amendment • Benchmarking • Dissemination to students of educational expectations 	
8	Institute of Engineering Education Taiwan (IEET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Educational Objectives • Students • Faculty • Space & Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum • Institutional support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates Attribute & Assessment • Continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme outcomes • Discipline based criteria
9	Japan accreditation Board for Engineering (JABEE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of admission • Faculty • Educational Environment and Students Support • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational methods • Implementation of Learning & Education • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of Learning Outcomes • Self-review of Education • Continuous Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Outcomes
10	Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program environment • Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum content and quality • Continual improvement • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment tools & results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate attributes

The NBA was established in 2010 to improve the quality and relevance of education in technical and professional institutions. It is responsible for stimulating the quality of teaching, introduced self-assessment and accountability in HEIs so that level of education could be raised to international standards. Likewise, “Liberty for Quality” has been established by Sweden in order to implement self-quality assurance systems. Apart from this, it has also established Office of the University Chancellor to govern and monitor the quality issues at national levels (Natarajan, 2000). Further, The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and the Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (ISRHE) had been established by Norway in order to assess the quality of higher education in its country.

2.5. Significance of the study

The research was related to the comparison of higher education quality accreditation agencies between India and foreign countries. The research analyzed that many organizations at global levels have established accreditation units to enhance the level of education in their particular country. Like, Open Market for Education had been introduced by the Danish system of higher education so that the modernization of higher education could take place adequately. In India, higher education quality accreditation agencies like All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), University Grants Commission (UGC), National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Board of Accreditation (NBA), etc. so that the assessment and accreditation of education in high institutions could be carried out in an adequate manner (Goel, 2006). In addition to this, research provided insights about the various initiatives taken by accreditation units to improve the quality of education in India.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Findings of the study

The research provided adequate information about the various accreditation agencies that had been established in India like, AICTE, UGC, NAAC, NBA, etc. so that the quality of education in India could be improved (Dahlgaard, Khanji & Kristensen, 2008). The research also provides insights about the various accreditation agencies that were operating at global levels like Portuguese Council of Rectors (CRP) in Portugal, Liberty for Quality” in Sweden, etc. so that enhancement of education could be done in an adequate manner. It was found that many initiatives like NAAC-NCTE joint action plans, the formation of National Consultative Committees, e-learning classes, digital boards, etc were done by the accreditation agencies in order to improve the standard of education that was imparted in the higher education system. The accreditation agencies were also responsible for assessing and accrediting the colleges and universities (Chikkatur & Sagar, 2010). They also carried monitoring activities, evaluation procedures, supervising activities so that the education system in India could be organized and standardized. They also provided grants and introduced innovative and technological advancements into the teaching processes of the universities. In addition to this, interactive sessions and industrial sessions have also been introduced so that the students could learn in a more efficient manner. Further, the online portal developed by the accreditation agencies had provided the students with an authentic platform to get relevant information about the various universities, colleges, and higher educational institutions (Boelen & Woollard, 2009).

3.2. Discussions on the results obtained

By analyzing the various facts it was found that the accreditation agencies like AICTE, UGC, NAAC, NBA, etc. were necessary to bring a systematic culture of education in India. The NAAC introduced various initiatives like the national qualifications framework, etc. so that the assessment related to teachers’ appraisal, accreditation of different disciplines, etc. could be done in an adequate manner. It was found that AICTE has also established bureaus and Board of studies in order to carry out supervising the activities related the provision of education in the higher educational institutions. The researcher also found that the accreditation units like NBA were responsible for providing date-base expertise, post-accreditation review, quality sustenance, etc. which helped in improving the standard of education in various universities, colleges and HEIs (Blackmur, 2008).

4. CONCLUSION

The research was related to the comparison of the higher education quality accreditation parameters of India with other global accreditation agencies (Best & Kahn, 2016). The research provided adequate learning about the various accreditation agencies like NAAC, NBA and its criteria’s that were operating in India along with the foreign accreditation agencies. The initiatives taken by the accreditation agencies helped in changing the traditional form of education and learning practiced in universities in India to a modern and innovative way of teaching, education, and learning. The research also highlighted the various improvements that took place due to the increase in the efficiency of

quality development schemes employed in educational institutes in India. The initiatives taken by the accreditation agencies helped the students get aware of the authentic universities and colleges where they could apply and get a quality education (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In addition to this, the online portal developed by the various accreditation agencies helped in updating and upgrading the learning levels of students so that they could take better decisions about their future career and studies.

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