

Assessment and Accreditation in Higher Education: Perception by College Teachers

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to find out how college teachers perceive the assessment and accreditation of higher education in Mizoram. The sample was collected randomly from five colleges in Aizawl. The sample consisted of 117 teachers with 62 male and 55 female teachers. A 20 item Perception Questionnaire on assessment and accreditation in higher education constructed by the investigators was used to collect data from college teachers. It was found that most of the college teachers had a positive view of the assessment and accreditation in higher education in Mizoram. A few recommendations to improve assessment and accreditation in higher education in Mizoram were suggested.

Key words: Observation, Assessment, Accreditation, Higher Education, College teachers

Introduction:

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an organization in India that assesses and accredits Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including colleges and universities. NAAC accreditation is a process by which colleges and universities are evaluated based on various parameters to assess the quality of education they offer. It involves a comprehensive assessment of the institution's infrastructure, faculty, teaching methodologies, research, student support, and overall governance.

NAAC accreditation plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of higher education institutions in India. This accreditation process assesses academic programs,

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faculty quality, research, infrastructure, and governance within these institutions, ensuring that they meet established standards. The importance of NAAC accreditation lies in several key aspects. First, it serves as a quality benchmark, enabling prospective students and parents to make informed choices when selecting an institution. Accredited colleges and universities are perceived as having higher standards, thereby attracting more admissions. This, in turn, fosters healthy competition among educational institutions, pushing them to continuously improve and innovate.

Moreover, NAAC accreditation is closely linked to funding opportunities. Many government and private funding agencies consider an institution's accreditation status when disbursing grants and scholarships, which can significantly benefit both the institution and its students. Also, accreditation is vital for global recognition. Accredited institutions are more readily acknowledged on the international stage, facilitating student mobility and collaborations with foreign universities. Essentially, the accreditation process is a catalyst for quality improvement. Institutions work diligently to meet and exceed NAAC's criteria, leading to enhancements in infrastructure, curriculum development, and faculty development. Overall, NAAC accreditation is an essential mechanism for maintaining and enhancing the quality of higher education in India, benefiting both educational institutions and the students they serve.

Rationale of the study:

Studying college teachers' observation with respect to assessment and accreditation in higher education is essential because it provides valuable insights into the quality of higher education in the state, as these teachers are at the forefront of the educational system and have a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities within their institutions. Their perceptions can shed light on the effectiveness of accreditation processes in improving the quality of education, which, in turn, can inform policy decisions and reforms. Besides, understanding how teachers perceive these mechanisms can impact their motivation and commitment to maintaining high standards, ultimately benefiting students. Moreover, the study can help identify areas where further support and resources may be required, fostering continuous improvement in higher education institutions. To put it simply, examining the perceptions of college teachers on assessment and accreditation is a critical step towards enhancing the overall quality of higher education in the state and ensuring it aligns with the needs and aspirations of both educators and students.

Objective of the study:

1. To find out the perception of college teachers on the assessment and accreditation in higher education in Mizoram

Method of study:

Descriptive survey method is a research approach that collects data to describe characteristics, behaviors, or opinions within a population, often using structured questionnaires to gather information. It focuses on providing a comprehensive overview of the subject under study. The present study employs the descriptive survey method.

Population and sample:

The population consists of all college teachers in Aizawl teaching the arts, science and commerce stream. The sample was collected randomly from five colleges. The sample consisted of 117 teachers with 62 male and 55 female teachers.

Tools used for collecting data:

A 20 item Perception Questionnaire on assessment and accreditation in higher education constructed by the investigators was used to collect data from college teachers. Respondents has to tick their response out of the options provided in each item

Analysis and interpretation:

Data was analyzed by finding out the percentage of the responses of the teachers for each item and are presented in the following tables.

Table - 1
Importance of accreditation for colleges in Mizoram

Item - 1	Very Important	Moderately important	Not important at all
What is your overall perception of the importance of accreditation for colleges in Mizoram?	85 (72.65%)	29 (24.79%)	3 (2.56%)

As can be seen in Table – 1, with respect to the question on the importance of accreditation for colleges in Mizoram, majority (72.65%) of college teachers perceived it to be very important, 24.79% perceived it to be moderately important and only 2.56% perceived it is not important at all. In essence, this emphasizes the critical importance of college accreditation in Mizoram.

Table – 2**Familiarity with accreditation process**

Item - 2	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar at all
How familiar are you with the accreditation process in Mizoram's higher education institutions?	46 (39.32%)	70 (59.83%)	1 (0.85%)

With respect to teachers' familiarity with accreditation process in Mizoram's higher education institutions, Table – 2 shows that significant percentage 59.83% of teachers are somewhat familiar, 39.32% are very familiar and only .85% are not familiar at all. This suggests that majority of college teachers have a reasonable level of understanding regarding the accreditation procedures in the state's higher education institutions.

Table – 3

Item - 3	Yes	Not sure	No
Do you believe that accreditation positively impacts the quality of education in colleges?	79 (67.52%)	21 (17.95%)	17 (14.53%)

In Table 3, it is evident that a majority of college teachers, specifically 67.52%, express a belief that accreditation has a positive influence on the quality of education within colleges. Moreover, 17.95% of teachers appear to have a degree of uncertainty regarding this impact, while 14.53% of teachers hold the view that accreditation does not contribute to the enhancement of education quality in colleges. This shows that majority of college teachers believe in the positive impact of accreditation for quality education in colleges of Mizoram.

Table – 4**Satisfaction with administrative support provided to facilitate accreditation**

Item - 4	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Are you satisfied with the level of administrative support provided to facilitate the accreditation process in your college?	72 (61.54%)	41 (35.04%)	4 (3.42%)

The data from Table 4 indicates that a substantial majority of college teachers, specifically 61.54%, expressed satisfaction with the administrative support offered to facilitate the accreditation process in their college. Additionally, 35.04% of teachers adopted a neutral stance on the matter, while a mere 3.42% expressed dissatisfaction. This suggests that the predominant sentiment among college teachers is one of contentment with the administrative support provided for accreditation processes in their institutions.

Table – 5**Participation in workshops or training related to accreditation**

Item - 5	Yes, multiple workshop	Yes, one workshop	No, but interested
Have you participated in any workshops or training related to accreditation in the past?	69 (58.97%)	21 (17.95%)	25 (21.37%)

The data from Table 5 indicates that a significant majority of college teachers, specifically 58.97%, have actively engaged in multiple workshops or training sessions related to accreditation in the past. Furthermore, 17.95% of teachers attended a single workshop, 21.37% expressed an interest in participating but have not done so yet, and a small 1.71% of teachers showed neither interest nor participation in these activities. This data highlights the fact that the predominant pattern among college teachers is active participation in multiple workshops and training sessions associated with accreditation in the past.

Table – 6**Adequacy of reflecting the unique challenges and needs of colleges**

Item - 6	Yes, completely	Yes, to some extent	No, not at all
Do you think that the accreditation process adequately reflects the unique challenges and needs of colleges in Mizoram?	31 (26.5%)	83 (70.94%)	3 (2.56%)

According to the data in Table 6, the findings indicate that 70.94% of college teachers believe that the accreditation process adequately reflects the unique challenges and needs of colleges in Mizoram to some extent, 26.50% of college teachers believe it reflect it completely. Only a small percentage, 2.56% of teachers think it does not reflect at all. This suggests that the majority of teachers share the view that the accreditation process, to some extent, adequately addresses the distinctive challenges and requirements of colleges in Mizoram.

Table – 7**Regularity of self-assessment and reflection on teaching methods & practices**

Item - 7	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
How often do you engage in self-assessment and reflection on your teaching methods and practices?	59 (50.43%)	57 (48.72%)	1 (0.85%)

The data in Table 7 indicates that a significant proportion of college teachers, specifically 50.43%, regularly engage in self-assessment and reflective practices relating

to their teaching methods and approaches. Furthermore, 48.72% of teachers engage in such activities occasionally, while only a minimal percentage of 0.85% never participate in them. This implies that the majority of college teachers actively involve themselves in self-assessment and reflective processes related to their teaching methods and practices.

Table – 8

Adequacy in recognizing and rewarding effective teaching practices

Item - 8	Yes, completely	Yes, to some extent	No, not at all
Do you believe that the accreditation process adequately recognizes and rewards effective teaching practices?	31 (26.49%)	78 (66.67%)	8 (6.84%)

The data presented in Table 8 indicates that a substantial proportion of college teachers, specifically 66.67%, believe that the accreditation process partially acknowledges and rewards effective teaching practices. Moreover, 26.49% of teachers feel that it fully recognizes and rewards these practices, while a small 6.84% express the view that it doesn't acknowledge or reward them at all. This suggests that the majority of college teachers perceive the accreditation process as recognizing and rewarding effective teaching practices to some extent.

Table – 9

Level of transparency and communication existing between college faculty and accreditation bodies in Mizoram

Item - 9	High level	Moderate level	Low level
What level of transparency and communication exists between college faculty and accreditation bodies in Mizoram?	30 (25.64%)	83 (70.94%)	4 (3.42%)

Table 9 data reveals that a substantial 70.94% of teachers perceive that the level of transparency and communication between college faculty and accreditation bodies in Mizoram is at a moderate level. Moreover, 25.64% of teachers feel that this transparency and communication are at a high level, while a minimal 3.42% consider it to be at a low level. This suggests that the majority of college teachers in Mizoram believe there is a moderate degree of transparency and communication between the college faculty and accreditation bodies.

Table – 10

Adequately in addressing issues of inclusivity and diversity in higher education

Item - 10	Yes, completely	Yes, to some extent	No, not at all
Do you think that the accreditation process in Mizoram adequately addresses issues of inclusivity and diversity in higher education?	21 (17.95%)	92 (78.63%)	4 (3.42%)

Table 10 shows that 78.63% of college teachers think that the accreditation process in Mizoram adequately deals with issues of inclusivity and diversity in higher education to some extent. Moreover, 17.95% of teachers perceive that it fully addresses these issues, while a mere 3.42% believe it falls short in addressing them. In essence, majority of college teachers in Mizoram believe that accreditation process adequately addresses issues of inclusivity and diversity in higher education

Table – 11

flexibility to accommodate the unique needs of colleges in Mizoram

Item - 11	Yes	Undecided	No
Do you believe that the accreditation process should be more flexible to accommodate the unique needs of colleges in Mizoram?	95 (81.2%)	12 (10.26%)	10 (8.54%)

As indicated in Table 11, a significant 81.20% of college teachers advocate for greater flexibility in the accreditation process to cater to the distinct requirements of colleges in Mizoram. Meanwhile, 10.26% of teachers remain undecided on the matter, and only 8.54% hold the view that the accreditation process need not be more flexible. In essence, the prevailing sentiment among college teachers is in favor of enhancing the flexibility of the accreditation process to better align with the unique needs of colleges in Mizoram.

Table – 12

Information about the assessment methods used in the accreditation process

Item - 12	Very well informed	Moderately well-informed	Not well -informed
How well-informed do you feel about the assessment methods used in the accreditation process?	51 (43.59%)	64 (54.7%)	2 (1.71%)

Table 12 reveals that the majority of college teachers, with 54.70% in total, felt moderately well-informed about the assessment methods utilized in the accreditation process. Specifically, 43.59% of teachers considered themselves very well-informed. Only a small 1.71% of teachers expressed that they were not well-informed. In essence, this data indicates that most college teachers possessed a good level of understanding regarding the assessment methods employed in the accreditation process.

Table – 13

Recognizes and values teaching excellence alongside research and publication achievements

Item - 13	Yes, completely	Yes, to some extent	No, not at all
Is teaching excellence given due recognition in the accreditation process alongside research and publication achievements?	43 (36.75%)	69 (58.98%)	5 (4.27%)

Table 13 indicates that a substantial proportion of college teachers, with 58.98 % in total, believe that teaching excellence is given due recognition in the accreditation process alongside research and publication achievements. More specifically, 36.75% of teachers completely agree with this, and only a small 4.27% do not agree with this. In essence, the data reveals that the majority of college teachers are of the view that the accreditation process gives due recognition to teaching excellence to some extent alongside research and publication achievements.

Table – 14

Role of college teachers in the accreditation process

Item - 14	Very influential	Moderately influential	Not influential
How do you perceive the role of college teachers in the accreditation process?	76 (64.96%)	37 (31.62%)	4 (3.42%)

Table 14 shows that 64.96% of college teachers perceive the role of college teachers in the accreditation process as very influential, 31.62% of teachers consider it as moderately influential, and 3.42% of teachers believe it is not influential at all. This indicates that the majority of college teachers perceive the role of college teachers in the accreditation process as very influential

Table – 15

Item - 15	Extremely valuable	Somewhat valuable	Not valuable at all
How do you perceive the role of student feedback in the accreditation process?	70 (59.83%)	47 (40.17%)	0

The data in Table 15 indicates that a significant majority of college teachers highly value the role of student feedback in the accreditation process, with nearly 60% perceiving it as extremely valuable, and the rest considering it somewhat valuable. None of the teachers regard student feedback as not valuable at all. This stresses the strong importance that college teachers place on student feedback within the accreditation process.

Table – 16

Role of research and publications in the accreditation process

Item - 16	Very important	Moderately important	Not important at all
What role does research and publications play in the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram?	74 (63.25%)	41 (35.04%)	2 (1.71%)

The data in Table 16 reveals that an overwhelming majority of college teachers consider the role of research and publications in the accreditation process to be highly significant, with more than 63% regarding it as very important. Additionally, around 35% of teachers find it moderately important, and only a small fraction, approximately 1.71%, do not see it as important at all. This clearly indicates that most college teachers advocate for a prominent and crucial role for research and publications in the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram.

Table – 17

Most significant barrier to successful accreditation for colleges

Item - 17	Lack of resources	Insufficient infrastructure	Faculty shortages	Administrative challenges	others
What, in your opinion, is the most significant barrier to successful accreditation for colleges in Mizoram?	45 (38.46%)	28 (23.93%)	24 (20.51%)	16 (13.67%)	5 (4.27%)

In Table 17, it is evident that a substantial portion of college teachers in Mizoram regards the lack of resources as the foremost and most significant hindrance to the successful accreditation of colleges in the region, with nearly 38.46% highlighting this issue. Moreover,

around 23.93% of teachers identify insufficient infrastructure as the primary barrier, while 20.51% point to faculty shortages as a key challenge. Moreover, 13.67% express concerns about administrative challenges, and 4.27% acknowledge other barriers. Consequently, the most prevalent perception among teachers is that the scarcity of resources represents the most substantial impediment to the successful accreditation of colleges in Mizoram.

Table – 18

Greatest challenges in implementing effective assessment practices

Item - 18	Lack of assessment expertise	Resistance to change	Limited resources for assessment	Inadequate training	Others
What, in your opinion, is the greatest challenge in implementing effective assessment practices in your college?	24 (20.51%)	26 (22.22%)	43 (36.75%)	24 (20.51%)	1 (0.86%)

In Table 18, the data indicates that a significant portion of college teachers, comprising 36.75%, perceive limited resources for assessment as the most prominent hurdle when it comes to implementing effective assessment practices in their college. Besides, 22.22% of teachers believe resistance to change is the greatest challenge. Moreover, 20.51% of teachers express that the primary challenge lies in the lack of assessment expertise, while an equal percentage, another 20.51%, consider inadequate training to be a substantial barrier. It is worth noting that only a very small fraction, 0.86% of teachers, identify other challenges. Therefore, the prevailing sentiment among teachers is that limited resources for assessment represent the foremost challenge in the successful implementation of effective assessment practices in their college.

Table – 19

Primary benefit of the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram

Item - 19	Enhanced academic quality	Increased funding opportunities	Improved reputation	Accountability and transparency	Others
In your opinion, what is the primary benefit of the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram?	45 (38.46%)	37 (31.62%)	25 (21.37%)	9 (7.67%)	1 (0.86%)

Table 19 reveals that the majority of college teachers in Mizoram, with 38.46% of respondents, regard the foremost advantage of the accreditation process for colleges is an

enhancement in academic quality. Furthermore, a substantial 31.62% of teachers see it primarily as an avenue for increased funding opportunities, while 21.37% attribute it to an improved reputation. A smaller proportion, 7.67%, emphasizes its role in fostering accountability and transparency. Only a negligible 0.86% foresee other benefits. Therefore, it is evident that most teachers believe that the central advantage of the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram lies in the improvement of academic quality.

Table – 20

Improvements to enhance the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram

Item - 20	More training and workshops for faculty	Increased collaboration between colleges and accreditation bodies	Tailored accreditation criteria for Mizoram's context	Better communication channels	Others
What additional measures or improvements would you suggest to enhance the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram?	45 (38.46%)	37 (31.62%)	25 (21.37%)	9 (7.69%)	2 (1.71%)

Table 20 indicates that a significant 38.46% of college teachers advocate the implementation of additional training and workshops for faculty as a key measure to enhance the accreditation process for colleges in Mizoram. Another notable 31.62% of teachers suggest fostering increased collaboration between colleges and accreditation bodies. Moreover, 21.37% of teachers emphasize the importance of tailoring accreditation criteria to suit the specific context of Mizoram. A smaller but significant 7.69% advocate for the improvement of communication channels. A minority, only 1.71% of teachers, raise various other points. In summary, the primary recommendation made by most teachers to enhance the accreditation process in Mizoram's colleges is the provision of more training and workshops for faculty.

Recommendations to improve assessment and accreditation in higher education in Mizoram:

To enhance assessment and accreditation in higher education, several key recommendations have been identified. These recommendations aim to improve the quality of education and ensure that institutions meet accreditation standards:

Implement Formative Assessment: Formative assessment strategies can enhance student learning by providing ongoing feedback. It is crucial to incorporate these methods into the

teaching and learning process, helping students better understand their progress and areas for improvement

Focus on Learning Outcomes: Accreditation processes should prioritize assessing and grading systems that focus on learning outcomes. This shift can help institutions align their educational objectives with accreditation standards and ensure that students are achieving the intended learning goals

New Perspectives on Accreditation: Consider new perspectives on accreditation. Exploring different ways to use accreditation to improve higher education is essential. Institutions should be open to addressing the issues that need attention and determine how to address them effectively

Incorporate Collaborative Approaches: Collaborative approaches to accreditation can bring significant benefits to higher education. Institutions can benefit from collaborative efforts to ensure quality education and follow higher standards

Professional Development and Training: Provide faculty with ongoing professional development and training opportunities. Enhancing the skills and expertise of faculty members is crucial for effective assessment and accreditation processes

Tailored Accreditation Criteria: Customize accreditation criteria to align with the specific context and needs of the region or institution. Tailoring the criteria can ensure that accreditation is relevant and achievable within the given context

Improved Communication Channels: Establish better communication channels within institutions and between accreditation bodies and colleges. Clear and effective communication is key to successful assessment and accreditation processes

These recommendations collectively contribute to improving the assessment and accreditation processes in higher education, ensuring that institutions meet quality standards and provide a better learning experience for students.

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