

3. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

Why in News?

- The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has recently been facing allegations of irregularities in its functioning.

Highlights

- It is an autonomous body under the University Grants Commission (UGC) responsible for assessing the quality of higher educational institutions in India.
- Through a multi-layered assessment process, it awards grades ranging from A++ to C based on parameters such as curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research and financial well-being.
- The former chairperson of NAAC's executive committee resigned after alleging that malpractices were leading to questionable grades being awarded to some institutions.
- An Inquiry commissioned found irregularities in the IT system and allocation of assessors.
- The inquiry also highlighted that nearly 70% of experts from the pool of around 4,000 assessors have not received any opportunity to make site visits.
- As of January 2023, out of the 1,113 universities and 43,796 colleges in the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 2020-2021, only 418 universities and 9,062 colleges were NAAC-accredited.
- The UGC launched a scheme named 'Paramarsh' in 2019 to mentor institutes aspiring to get accredited.
- NAAC explored the possibility of issuing Provisional Accreditation for Colleges (PAC) to one-year-old institutes.
- The National Education Policy (2020) has set an ambitious target of getting all higher educational institutes to obtain the highest level of accreditation over the next 15 years.
- The use of digital technology can help make education more accessible, cost-effective, and efficient.
- Institutions should invest in digital infrastructure and provide training to students and faculty to adapt to new technologies.
- International collaborations can help improve the quality of education and research in India. Institutions should partner with foreign institutions to exchange knowledge, expertise, and resources.