

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The background and literature review have been discussed in the last two chapters. This chapter presents research objectives, research questions, and nature of research questions. This chapter also details design and methodology of conducting this study including the rationale behind the selection of research method, respondents, data collection methods and data analysis.

3.1 Research Questions:

In the context that HEIs in India have successfully gone through NAAC accreditation have not collectively assessed the benefits that they have derived from going through NAAC accreditation and the prospective HEIs in India that intend go through NAAC accreditation might have some expectations in going through NAAC accreditation, the present study intends to address the following research questions:

1. Are the expectations of HEIs from NAAC accreditation is in-line with benefits claimed by NAAC?
2. Do HEIs realize benefits from NAAC accreditation?
3. Is there any association between expectations and benefits from NAAC accreditation?
4. Are there differences between the expectations and benefits accrued by the HEIs?

3.2 Research Objectives

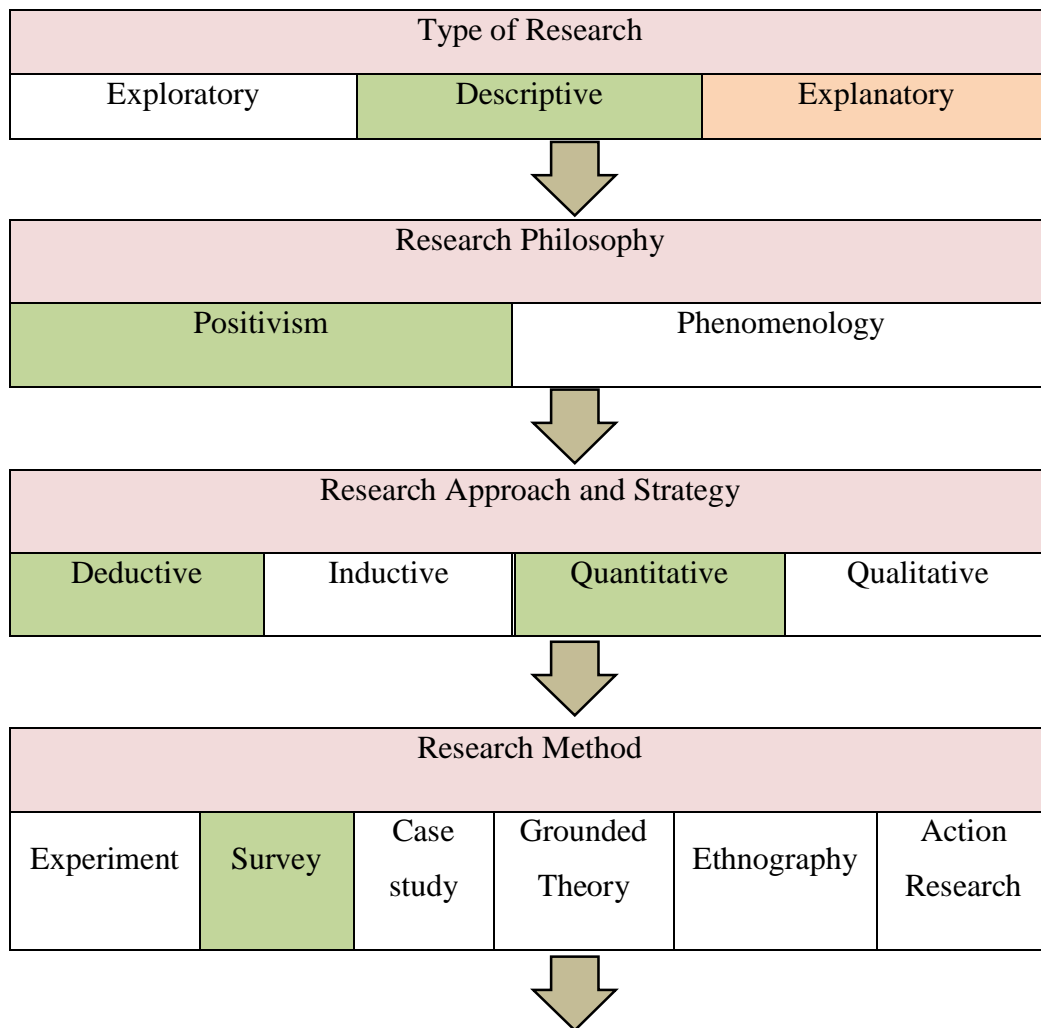
The present study has the following Research objectives:

1. Evaluate the expectations that NAAC accredited and non-NAAC accredited HEIs in India have from NAAC accreditation process.
2. Evaluate the benefits that NAAC accredited HEIs have accrued by going through the NAAC accreditation process.

3. Evaluate the extent and nature of association between expectations and benefits that HEIs have and realized, respectively through NAAC accreditation process.
4. Assess and evaluate if there are gaps in expectations and benefits among HEIs in India while going through NAAC accreditation process.

With the objectives stated above; the proposed research proceeds with the following Research methodology. A snap shot of the complete research methodology proposed in the present study is provided in the following flow chart as well.

Research methodology at a glance – Evaluation of Expectations and benefits from NAAC accreditation



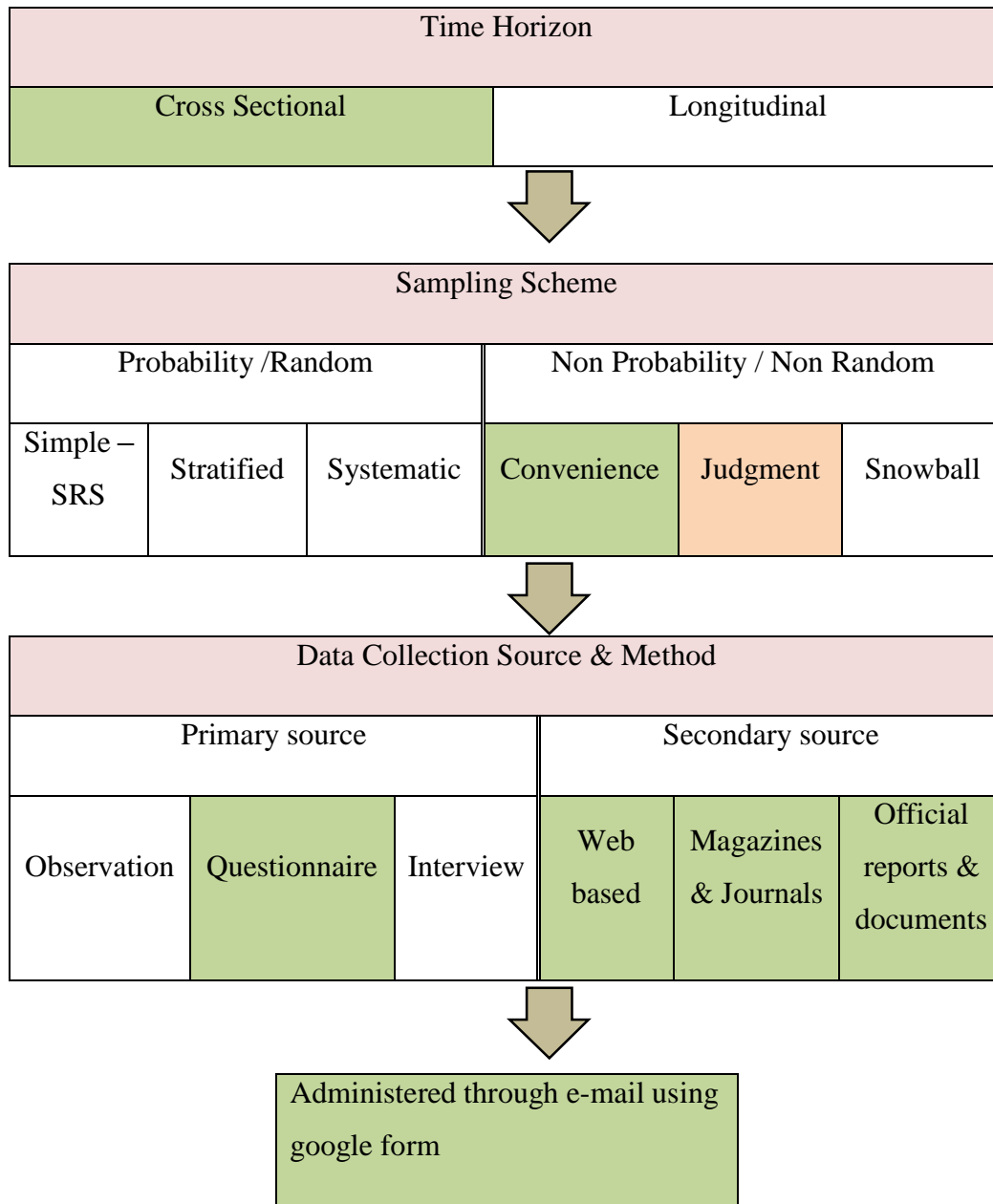


Fig. 3.1 Research flow of the study

3.3 Type of Research

It is fundamental and very important to choose correct research methodologies to execute and further accomplish any research work. Though, it is also true that the research itself dictate the methodologies to be adopted and method to be used to collect data (Research Design, 2016).

Often, researchers intend to choose a design and method of his/her choice in which he/she is more conversant with or a method recommended by his/her colleague[s]. However, a good research depends on the decision taken in choosing research design with good consideration and suitable design rather than choosing a methodology that is more acquainted to the researcher (Lowhorn, 2007).

Type of research can be classified different ways but majorly it differentiated in three types; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The present study adopts descriptive & explanatory research. The descriptive research attempts to explain, describe and deduce the conditions of the present. The purpose of a descriptive research is to understand a phenomenon that is occurring at a specific time and place. A descriptive research is concerned with conditions, practices, structures, differences or relationships that exist, opinions held and processes that are going on or trends that are evident. It is used to get information relating to the present state of the phenomena to describe "what exists" with respect to the conditions in that particular situation (Key, 2017). Whereas, the explanatory research is an effort to link ideas to understand cause and effect. Through, such studies researchers want to explain about the phenomenon "what is going on". Explanatory research focuses on how different variables come together and interact (Kowalczyk, 2016). The present study "Evaluation of expectations and benefits from NAAC accreditation by Indian HEIs" is an attempt to describe "what exists" and explain "what is going on" both.

3.4 Research Philosophy

Broadly the research philosophies could be categorized in to two – Positivism and Phenomenology. While phenomenology is a research philosophy that concerns structures and experiences of consciousness and is mostly used to understanding foundational questions in disciplines, Positivism is a research philosophy that believes that information is derived from logic and mathematical methods. The present research intends to use positivist research

philosophy to evaluate the expectations and benefits from the NAAC accreditation process.

3.5 Research approach and strategy:

The research approach as it flows from the research philosophy of positivism would be either deductive approach or the inductive approach; while inductive approach builds the blocks of research to give it a shape, name and meaning, the deductive approach infers from such existing shapes names and the meanings newer interpretations. So far as this study is concerned as it tries to infer expectations and benefits from the existing accreditation processes of NAAC, it follows the deductive research approach. The strategies of research following from the positivism would be either quantitative approach or the qualitative approach, as this study intends to draw conclusions using numbers and statistical tools to further draw analysis; it essentially follows a quantitative strategy.

3.6 Research method:

Research methods or design that mostly follows the quantitative studies are experimental designs or survey designs; whereas, the grounded theory, ethnographic studies and the action research mostly follows the qualitative research strategies. This study proposes to employ a survey design or method to study its objectives.

3.7 Time horizon:

All of the research plans could be conducted over a long period of time or in other words longitudinal time horizon or pick a particular point in time i.e., a cross section of the whole time horizon, for the study of a phenomenon; the present study as it studies the expectations and benefits of NAAC accreditation at a particular period of time, it is conducted over cross-sectional time horizon.

3.8 Sampling scheme:

All of the research samples in the present times are classified either under a type of probability sampling or non-probability sampling, the present study engages a combination of non-probability sampling – convenience sampling and judgment sampling.

3.9 Data collection source and method:

The data for the present study is collected through both primary and secondary sources. The data collected from the primary sources are collected through a well-structured questionnaire while the secondary data is collected through the relevant sources from the web, journals, magazines as well as reports and documents pertaining to the research area.

3.10 Data collection tool for primary data:

The primary data for the present research is collected from a pool of valid NAAC accredited HEIs in India, the list has taken from the NAAC official website and the list of approved universities available on UGC website through a well-structured questionnaire using google form.

Keeping the research questions and research objectives in mind, it is proposed to construct an inventory of expectations arising from different parameters that NAAC accreditation process attempts to cover in the process of accreditation and the benefits that the NAAC claims that the institutions that get NAAC accreditation derive from going through the accreditation process. Similarly it is also proposed to construct benefits from the expectations inventory appropriate with the expectations and in-line with the benefits that the NAAC claims that the institutions that get NAAC accreditation derive from going through the accreditation process. Following are the benefits claimed by the NAAC, extract taken from NAAC official web site” (NAAC, 2015) “Accreditation facilitates.

- Institution to know its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities through an informed review process.

- Identification of internal areas of planning and resource allocation
- Collegiality on the campus.
- Funding agencies look for objective data for performance funding.
- Institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy.
- New sense of direction and identity for institutions.
- The society look for reliable information on quality education offered.
- Employers look for reliable information on the quality of education offered to the prospective recruits.
- Intra and inter-institutional interactions.”

Each of the above nine statements, total 40 statements were derived; statements wise derived sub statements are as follows:

Statements	Sub statements
1 Institution to know its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities through an informed review process.	i. Helps the institution to know its strengths and weaknesses.
	ii. Helps in developing an informed review process as a part of integrated system.]
	iii. Helps in identifying opportunities and threats for an Institution.
	iv. Helps in developing bottom-up approach of informed review process in Institutions.
	v. Helps in developing top-down approaches of informed review process
	vi. Helps in developing mixed approaches of informed review process]
	vii. Guides in identifying areas of improvement through feedback process.]
2 Identification of internal areas of planning and resource allocation	i. Helps in identifying key areas of internal planning.
	ii. Helps and guides through providing direction for academic planning
	iii. Helps in better resource allocation & budgeting.
	iv. Helps in planning nature of Human Resource recruitment.
	v. Helps in providing guidelines for infrastructure planning.
3 Collegiality on the	i. Improves peer relations and helps resolving conflicts
	ii. Helps in creating culture of healthy competition among

campus.	different academic units
	iii. Ensures employees work united for the common purpose of the institution.]
	iv. Helps create culture where peers mutually respect each other’s commitments, goals and strategic plan]
	v. Helps in overall decision making process pertaining to Institution]
	vi. Improves inter-departmental and Intra-departmental communication]
4 Funding agencies look for objective data for performance funding.	i. Helps visibility of the institution to funding agencies.]
	ii. Ensures higher funding opportunities to the research centers, researchers and the institutions.]
	iii. Helps for funding agencies to decide institutions for funding]
5 Institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy.	i. Introduces and encourages use of modern & innovative teaching pedagogy]
	ii. Helps in consolidating teaching – learning process]
	iii. Helps in building structured relationship between teachers and students for effective teaching learning]
	iv. Helps faculty identify the areas where they need skill, knowledge and augmentation.]
6 New sense of direction and identity for institutions.	i. Provides meaningful inputs for optimal decision making]
	ii. Provides new sense of direction to top management]
	iii. Helps Branding the Institution]
	v Helps institutions indentify the processes required for continuous development]
	vi Provides a Unique identity to the institution]
7 The society look for reliable information on quality education offered.	i. Helps institution provide appropriate information to the prospective students]
	ii. Helps provides reliable information to promoters and funding agencies]
	iii. Helps prospective parents choose the institution for their wards]
	iv. Helps to set benchmarks that make external stake holders view the institution favorably.]
8 Employers look for reliable information on the quality of	i Helps prospective employer to choose the institution for recruitment.]

education offered to the prospective recruits.	ii. Helps communicate to the prospective employers the quality of education offered.]
9 Intra and inter-institutional interactions.	i. Provides clarity in roles and responsibilities of departments and individuals]
	ii. Ensures operationalization of Standard Operating Procedures]
	iii. Helps building Intra institutional communication structures]
	iv. Encourages decentralized system of Governance.]

Based on these 40 sub statements the questionnaire was prepared. The respondents are then asked to assign a level of agreement with the statements pertaining to the expectations and benefits on a four point agreement scale. The proposed questionnaire uses a four point scale to circumvent the problem of respondent choosing a neutral response as in the case of a five point or a seven point scale; as neutral response represents no response pertaining to opinion on benefit or an expectation.

The questionnaire is so constructed that the statements on expectations and benefits is duly followed by exhaustive and relevant demographic information about the HEIs so that the demographic information lends to meaningful analysis of the collected data.

3.11 Data Collection:

The data was collected through administering the questionnaire through email using google form. The list of institution with valid accreditation was downloaded from official website of NAAC. Similarly, the list of approved Universities was taken from UGC website. The list which was downloaded from NAAC website contains details of 3569 colleges and 134 Universities i.e. total 3703 HEIs all across the India. This list taken form UGC website contains details of 46 Central Universities, 329 State Universities, 207 Private State Universities and 129 Deemed to be Universities, these are total 711 Universities. Thereafter, the website of each of these institutions (i.e. 3569 colleges + 711 Universities = Total 4280 HEIs) were googled and email Ids of the head of institution of these Institutions were tried to extracted. There were

institution where we could not find email ids of head of institutions; we tried it to get it for next or next to next level. After collecting the email ids of these 4280 institutions, the request along with google form contain questionnaire were sent. As the response rate was quite low the two reminders were also sent. At last, out of these 4280 institutions only 322 had responded. Out of total 322 institutions 304 were accredited by NAAC and only 18 were not accredited by NAAC. It took more than one year to collect these responses from April 2015 to April 2016. It is also important to state that to test data reliability and internal consistency Cronbach's alpha both at initial and final stage was carried out. The value of Cronbach's Alpha $\alpha = 0.972$ indicated high consistency and reliability. Thereafter the data received through these responses are analyzed further, which is being covered in next chapter.