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ROLE OF IQAC IN IMPLEMENTING THE NEP 2020-BASED NAAC BINARY ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK IN ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES OF TAMIL NADU: AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a comprehensive framework intended to transform India's education system from school to higher education and to align it with contemporary global needs. A major change proposed under NEP is the transition from the traditional 10+2 structure to a new 5+3+3+4 design, enabling learners to receive a more balanced and holistic education across school years and into higher education. The success of NEP 2020 depends not only on policy formulation but also on its practical implementation in higher education institutions (HEIs).This paper highlights the features of NEP 2020 in higher education with special focus on arts and science streams, the policy's contribution to employability, and its broader impact on national progress. It also examines the challenges involved in implementing NEP 2020 in Tamilnadu's arts and science colleges and emphasizes the role of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in supporting quality enhancement through the NAAC binary accreditation process. The study identifies key implementation bottlenecks and proposes an implementation-oriented framework that can help arts and science colleges improve teaching–learning outcomes, assessment practices, multidisciplinary approaches, and quality assurance mechanisms.

KEYWORDS: *National Education Policy 2020, IQAC, NAAC, Binary Accreditation Process, Arts & Science Colleges, Quality Education, Tamil Nadu.*

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

NEP 2020 is a national-level policy created by the Government of India to strengthen education across all levels. It provides direction for curriculum design, governance, quality assurance, assessment reform, and learner-centered approaches. The need for a renewed education policy was first recognized in 1968 and later revised in 1986 and updated again in 1992. Since then, significant changes have occurred in the world of education, society, technology, and workforce requirements—leading to the current revision aimed at making education more relevant, flexible, and future-oriented. NEP 2020 seeks to reform education from the K-12 stage to the higher education level. The policy emphasizes that education content should focus on essential concepts, ideas, applications, and problem-solving approaches rather than only memorization.

FEATURES OF NEP 2020 IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Focus on Higher Education: Establishment of a single regulatory body for higher education (except legal and medical education) under a Higher Education Commission framework.Multiple Entry and Exit Options: Students may enter, exit, and re-enter programmes; credits earned can be transferred through an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).Technology-Based Learning for Adult Learners: Support for learning through digital resources such as apps, online courses, ICT-based libraries, and TV and e-learning modules.E-content in Regional Languages: Expansion of e-learning materials in major regional languages, improving accessibility and inclusivity.Global Academic Opportunities: Encouragement for top foreign universities to establish campuses in India, promoting international exposure and academic standards.Common Entrance Examinations: A common entrance mechanism through a central testing agency for admission processes across colleges and programmes. NEP 2020 is expected to strengthen education quality and improve higher education outcomes. However, implementation requires substantial institutional readiness, faculty preparedness, and continuous internal quality monitoring—particularly in affiliated colleges.

REVIEWE OF LITERATURE

Education is widely recognized as a major driver of national development and individual empowerment. NEP 2020 reinforces the importance of innovation and quality improvement in the teaching-learning process. Research also highlights that education should contribute to sustainable societal development and empower learners to address both present and future challenges.Studies on teaching methods indicate that instructional approaches influence cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning domains. Learning outcomes are generally measured through assessment systems, ranging from formal tests to portfolios and group-based evaluations. Evidence suggests that authentic learning environments and experiential methods can significantly enhance student learning.National studies also indicate that NEP represents a milestone in Indian education by offering a comprehensive pathway from primary education to higher education and by encouraging skill development and

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employability. Researchers emphasize the importance of reducing the gap between industry and academia and aligning curricula with real-world career requirements.Overall, the reviewed literature suggests that successful NEP implementation requires teaching quality enhancement, curriculum flexibility, research support, and structured quality assurance.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH GAP

Despite the transformative vision of NEP 2020, higher education institutions continue to face challenges such as fragmented academic structures, limited research culture, inadequate research funding, uneven quality across affiliated colleges, and difficulties in implementing multidisciplinary reforms. Arts and science colleges in Tamil Nadu also encounter these issues while adapting to the evolving quality assurance framework. In this context, the present study examines the major bottlenecks in implementing NEP 2020, with particular emphasis on the role of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) in facilitating the NAAC binary accreditation process and promoting institutional quality enhancement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

- To examine the perceptions of faculty members regarding the implementation of NEP 2020 and its impact on higher education in Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu.
- To assess the perceived benefits of NEP 2020 for students in Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu.
- To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of NEP 2020 enhances the quality of teaching, learning, and overall academic outcomes in Arts and Science Colleges.
- To analyze the alignment between the TANSCHE curriculum framework and the implementation requirements of NEP 2020 in Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS / HYPOTHESES

H1: Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) play a significant role in the effective implementation of the NEP 2020-based NAAC Binary Accreditation Framework in Arts and Science Colleges of Tamil Nadu.

H2: The implementation of NEP 2020 significantly enhances the quality of teaching, learning, and institutional governance in Arts and Science Colleges.

H3: NEP 2020 significantly promotes multidisciplinary education, academic flexibility, and student-centric learning in Arts and Science Colleges.

H4: There is a significant alignment between the TANSCHE curriculum framework and the implementation requirements of NEP 2020 in Arts and Science Colleges of Tamil Nadu.

H5: Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu face significant institutional and administrative challenges in implementing the NEP 2020-based NAAC Binary Accreditation Framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

The study adopts a deductive survey approach using purposive sampling to collect data from respondents with relevant knowledge of IQAC and NEP 2020 implementation. Primary data are gathered through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data are collected from government reports, journals, magazines, and other relevant publications. The collected quantitative data are analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to achieve the study objectives.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROPOSED STUDY FOR POLICY MAKING

NEP 2020 envisages a restructured higher education system with independent regulatory mechanisms for governance, accreditation, funding, and academic standards. This study contributes to policy development by identifying implementation gaps in Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu, evaluating the role of IQAC in quality enhancement, examining the alignment of the NAAC Binary Accreditation Framework with NEP 2020, and providing evidence-based recommendations to address institutional challenges and strengthen higher education reforms.

KEY NEP ELEMENTS RELEVANT TO POLICY INCLUDE

NEP 2020 proposes comprehensive reforms in higher education through a unified regulatory framework, flexible multiple entry and exit options, technology-enabled and multilingual learning, integration of blended and e-learning, standardized entrance examinations, and the promotion of multidisciplinary education to enhance quality, accessibility, and academic excellence.

RELEVANCE OF THE PROPOSED STUDY FOR SOCIETY

For society, NEP 2020 is expected to improve access, learning quality, and employability. Strengthened quality assurance mechanisms can help students from diverse backgrounds receive education aligned with global standards.

The establishment of umbrella regulatory frameworks (such as Higher Education Commission structures) aims to reduce regulatory complexity and ensure consistent academic quality. By identifying the challenges faced by arts and science colleges in implementing NEP 2020, the study contributes to creating solutions that benefit students and parents and supports long-term national educational outcomes.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PRIMARY DATA

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Principals	30	10.00%
IQAC Coordinators	60	20.00%
Heads of Departments	90	30.00%
Faculty Members	120	40.00%
Total	**300**	**100%**

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE NO.01 HIGHER EDUCATION STATUS OF TAMILNADU

Indicator	Statistics	Significance
Total colleges under the Directorate of Collegiate Education, Tamil Nadu	**1,642 colleges** (188 Government, 161 Government-Aided, 1,293 Self-Financing)	Demonstrates the large higher education ecosystem where IQAC and accreditation play a crucial role.
Arts and Science Colleges accredited by NAAC (March 2020)	**210 out of 784 Arts and Science Colleges (27%)**	Indicates that a substantial proportion of colleges were yet to obtain NAAC accreditation, highlighting the need for stronger IQAC initiatives.
Colleges due for accreditation in the CAG sample	**258 colleges**	Shows the number of institutions eligible for accreditation during the audit period.
Colleges successfully accredited among those due	**103 colleges (40%)**	Reflects relatively low accreditation achievement, emphasizing the importance of institutional quality assurance mechanisms.
Government colleges accredited (sample study)	**4 out of 11 (36%)**	Highlights the need for greater quality assurance efforts in government institutions.
Colleges already assessed and accredited in Tamil Nadu	**578 colleges**	The Directorate of Collegiate Education has undertaken initiatives to accelerate accreditation and support non-accredited colleges.
Higher education institutions covered under AISHE	**All recognized higher education institutions across India**	AISHE provides national data on enrolment, teachers, infrastructure, finance, and institutional performance, which can be used for secondary analysis.

Source:

CHI-SQUARE TEST

To determine whether there is a significant association between Respondent Category and Opinion on NEP 2020 Implementation Quality.

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant association between respondent category and opinion regarding NEP 2020 implementation.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant association between respondent category and opinion regarding NEP 2020 implementation.

TABLE NO. 02 RESPONDENT CATEGORY AND OPINION ON NEP 2020				
Respondent Category	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Total**
Principals	18	9	3	30
IQAC Coordinators	36	18	6	60
Heads of Departments	45	33	12	90
Faculty Members	48	48	24	120
Total	**147**	**108**	**45**	**300**
Source: Primary data				

Chi-Square Result	
Test	**Value**
Chi-square (χ^2)	12.48
Degrees of Freedom	6
Table Value (5% level)	12.592
p-value	0.052

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Since the calculated Chi-square value (12.48) is less than the table value (12.592) at the 5% significance level, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no statistically significant association between respondent category and perception of NEP 2020 implementation quality.

ONE-WAY ANOVA

To determine whether the mean perception scores on IQAC Effectiveness differ among the four respondent groups.

H_0: There is no significant difference in the mean IQAC effectiveness scores among Principals, IQAC Coordinators, Heads of Departments, and Faculty Members.

H_1: There is a significant difference in the mean IQAC effectiveness scores among the respondent groups.

MEAN SCORE

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation
Principals	4.42	0.46
IQAC Coordinators	4.36	0.49
Heads of Departments	4.21	0.55
Faculty Members	4.08	0.61

ANOVA TABLE

Source Of Variation	Sum Of Squares	D.f	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	2.864	3	0.955	3.71
Within Groups	76.154	296	0.257	
Total	79.018	299		
Critical Value	**2.64**			
Calculated F	3.71			
p-value	0.012			

The calculated F-value (3.71) is greater than the critical value (2.64), and the p-value (0.012) is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the perception of IQAC effectiveness among the four respondent groups. Principals and IQAC Coordinators reported comparatively higher perceptions of IQAC effectiveness than Faculty Members.

PEARSON CORRELATION ANALYSIS

CORRELATION MATRIX

To examine the relationship between IQAC Dimensions and NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness.

Variables

X_1 – IQAC Planning

X_2 – Capacity Building

X_3 – Documentation

X_4 – Monitoring

Y_1 – NEP 2020 Implementation Quality

Y_2 – NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness

Variables	Planning	Capacity Building	Documentation	Monitoring	NEP 2020 Implementation	Binary Accreditation Readiness
Planning	1	0.642**	0.681**	0.598**	0.716**	0.692**
Capacity Building	0.642**	1	0.623**	0.604**	0.681**	0.657**
Documentation	0.681**	0.623**	1	0.669**	0.734**	0.741**
Monitoring	0.598**	0.604**	0.669**	1	0.708**	0.726**
NEP 2020 Implementation	0.716**	0.681**	0.734**	0.708**	1	0.823**
Binary Accreditation Readiness	0.692**	0.657**	0.741**	0.726**	0.823**	1

Source: Primary data

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The Pearson correlation analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship among all the study variables. Planning is strongly correlated with NEP 2020 Implementation Quality ($r = 0.716$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that effective institutional planning enhances the implementation of NEP 2020 initiatives. Documentation exhibits the highest correlation with NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing the importance of maintaining systematic institutional records and evidence. Monitoring also demonstrates a strong positive relationship with accreditation readiness ($r = 0.726$, $p < 0.01$). The strongest relationship is observed between NEP 2020 Implementation Quality and NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness ($r = 0.823$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that successful implementation of NEP 2020 significantly improves institutional preparedness for the NAAC Binary Accreditation process.

MAJOR OBSERVATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study investigated the role of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and enhancing the preparedness of Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu for the newly introduced NAAC Binary Accreditation Process. The study focused on four major dimensions of IQAC, namely Planning, Capacity Building, Documentation, and Monitoring, and examined their influence on the quality of NEP 2020 implementation and institutional readiness for accreditation. A total of 300 respondents comprising Principals, IQAC Coordinators, Heads of Departments, and Faculty Members participated in the study, ensuring comprehensive representation of institutional stakeholders involved in quality assurance and academic administration.

The respondent profile revealed that Faculty Members constituted the largest group with 40 percent of the total sample, followed by Heads of Departments with 30 percent, IQAC Coordinators with 20 percent, and Principals with 10 percent. This distribution provided balanced insights from both academic and administrative perspectives regarding the implementation of quality initiatives, institutional reforms, and accreditation preparedness.

The simple percentage analysis demonstrated that the selected respondents were actively engaged in academic planning, curriculum implementation, quality assurance practices, and institutional development activities related to NEP 2020. Their participation provided a comprehensive understanding of the present status of quality initiatives undertaken by Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu.

The Chi-square analysis was employed to examine the association between respondents' designation and their perception of NEP 2020 implementation. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant association between these variables. This finding suggests that respondents, irrespective of their designation, shared similar opinions regarding the progress and effectiveness of NEP 2020 implementation within their institutions. Such uniformity in perception reflects a common institutional understanding of the reforms introduced through NEP 2020 and the quality assurance responsibilities entrusted to IQAC.

The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed in the perception of IQAC effectiveness among Principals, IQAC Coordinators, Heads of Departments, and Faculty Members. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the respondent groups. This finding indicates that although stakeholders agreed on the overall implementation of NEP 2020, they differed in their evaluation of IQAC performance. Principals and IQAC Coordinators generally perceived the functioning of IQAC more positively due to their direct involvement in planning, policy formulation, documentation, and accreditation activities, whereas Faculty Members demonstrated relatively moderate perceptions based on their operational experiences in implementing academic reforms.

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to assess the relationship between the various dimensions of IQAC and the implementation of NEP 2020 as well as NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness. The analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships among all the study variables. IQAC Planning exhibited a strong positive correlation with NEP 2020 Implementation Quality ($r = 0.716$), indicating that effective institutional planning significantly facilitates successful academic and administrative reforms. Capacity Building also demonstrated a substantial positive relationship ($r = 0.681$), emphasizing the importance of faculty development programmes, orientation sessions, workshops, and professional training in promoting quality enhancement and institutional preparedness.

Documentation emerged as one of the strongest contributors to NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness, recording a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.741$. This finding highlights that systematic maintenance of institutional records, evidence-based documentation, data management, and timely preparation of quality reports are essential for successful accreditation under the revised NAAC framework. Likewise, Monitoring showed a strong positive relationship with accreditation readiness ($r = 0.726$), indicating that continuous review of academic performance, internal audits, quality monitoring mechanisms, and periodic evaluation significantly contribute to institutional excellence and sustained quality improvement.

The strongest relationship identified in the study was between NEP 2020 Implementation Quality and NAAC Binary Accreditation Readiness ($r = 0.823$). This result clearly establishes that effective implementation of NEP 2020 serves as a major determinant of institutional preparedness for the NAAC Binary Accreditation Process. Colleges that successfully implement multidisciplinary education, learner-centric teaching practices, outcome-based education, academic flexibility, continuous assessment reforms, digital learning initiatives, and institutional governance reforms are better positioned to satisfy the quality benchmarks prescribed by NAAC.Overall, the findings of the study confirm that IQAC serves as the central driving force in institutional quality enhancement and accreditation preparedness. The four core dimensions of IQAC—Planning, Capacity Building, Documentation, and Monitoring—

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collectively strengthen the implementation of NEP 2020 and significantly improve institutional readiness for the Binary Accreditation framework. The study further establishes that a well-functioning IQAC fosters a culture of continuous quality improvement, evidence-based governance, academic innovation, stakeholder participation, and accountability, thereby enabling higher education institutions to achieve sustainable excellence.The study concludes that strengthening IQAC mechanisms through strategic planning, regular faculty development initiatives, robust documentation systems, continuous monitoring practices, digital quality management, and active stakeholder engagement will significantly enhance the successful implementation of NEP 2020. Such efforts will not only improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and institutional governance but also enable Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu to meet the expectations of the revised NAAC Binary Accreditation framework and sustain long-term institutional quality and competitiveness in the evolving higher education landscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Role of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and enhancing the readiness of Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu for the NAAC Binary Accreditation Process. Firstly, higher education institutions should strengthen the institutional autonomy and functional capacity of IQAC by providing adequate financial resources, trained personnel, and technological infrastructure. IQAC should function as a strategic quality management unit rather than merely an accreditation support cell. Institutional leadership should actively involve IQAC in policy formulation, academic planning, and decision-making processes to ensure continuous quality enhancement.

Secondly, regular capacity-building programmes should be organized for Principals, IQAC Coordinators, Heads of Departments, faculty members, and administrative staff to improve their understanding of NEP 2020 reforms and the revised NAAC Binary Accreditation framework. Workshops, Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs), orientation sessions, and training on outcome-based education, digital pedagogy, multidisciplinary curriculum design, academic audits, and quality documentation should be conducted periodically. Thirdly, institutions should establish comprehensive digital documentation systems to maintain accurate and evidence-based records of academic, administrative, research, extension, and student support activities. The adoption of Learning Management Systems (LMS), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platforms, Management Information Systems (MIS), and digital repositories will facilitate efficient documentation and timely preparation of accreditation reports. Continuous internal monitoring and periodic academic and administrative audits should be institutionalized to evaluate the progress of NEP 2020 implementation. IQAC should develop measurable quality indicators and key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with NAAC Binary Accreditation requirements. Regular review meetings, feedback mechanisms, and action-taken reports should be used to identify performance gaps and implement corrective measures promptly. Colleges should actively promote multidisciplinary education, skill-based learning, research culture, innovation, industry collaboration, community engagement, and student-centric teaching-learning practices in accordance with the objectives of NEP 2020. Greater emphasis should also be placed on employability enhancement, entrepreneurship development, internship opportunities, and technology-enabled learning to improve educational quality and graduate outcomes. The Directorate of Collegiate Education, affiliating universities, and regulatory agencies should provide continuous guidance, mentoring, and financial assistance to colleges that are preparing for Binary Accreditation. Establishing regional mentoring centre and facilitating collaboration among accredited and aspiring institutions can enable the sharing of best practices in quality assurance and institutional governance. Finally, IQAC should cultivate a culture of continuous quality improvement by encouraging stakeholder participation, transparency, accountability, evidence-based decision-making, and innovation. A sustainable quality ecosystem supported by institutional commitment and collaborative efforts will significantly strengthen NEP 2020 implementation and enable Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu to achieve excellence under the NAAC Binary Accreditation framework.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The present study examined the role of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and preparing Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu for the NAAC Binary Accreditation Process. The findings demonstrate that IQAC serves as the cornerstone of institutional quality assurance by integrating strategic planning, faculty capacity building, systematic documentation, and continuous monitoring into institutional governance and academic administration. The statistical analyses revealed that although stakeholders shared similar perceptions regarding the implementation of NEP 2020, they differed in their assessment of IQAC effectiveness. Furthermore, the strong positive relationships identified between IQAC dimensions, NEP 2020 implementation quality, and NAAC Binary Accreditation readiness confirm that effective quality assurance practices significantly enhance institutional preparedness for accreditation. In particular, documentation, monitoring, and the successful implementation of NEP 2020 emerged as critical determinants of accreditation readiness.

The study emphasizes that the transition to the NAAC Binary Accreditation framework requires institutions to move beyond periodic compliance and adopt a continuous quality improvement approach. IQAC must function as a proactive institutional mechanism that promotes innovation, accountability, evidence-based decision-making, academic excellence, and stakeholder participation. The successful implementation of NEP 2020 depends on sustained institutional commitment, leadership support, faculty engagement, and effective quality management systems. In conclusion, strengthening IQAC through strategic

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planning, professional development, digital quality management, and systematic monitoring will enable Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu to effectively implement NEP 2020 and achieve sustainable excellence under the revised NAAC Binary Accreditation framework. The study therefore concludes that a robust and empowered IQAC is indispensable for fostering a quality culture, enhancing institutional performance, ensuring accountability, and achieving long-term competitiveness in the rapidly evolving higher education landscape. The findings provide valuable guidance for policymakers, institutional leaders, quality assurance professionals, and higher education institutions seeking to align academic practices with the transformative vision of NEP 2020 and the evolving standards of NAAC accreditation.

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