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NEP 2020: A FRAMEWORK FOR INSTITUTIONAL READINESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

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Keywords	Abstract
<i>National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education, Institutional Readiness, Academic Innovation, Quality Enhancement, Educational Leadership, Sustainable Development.</i>	The National Education Policy 2020 marks the most significant reform in the Indian education system since 1986, envisioning a holistic, multidisciplinary, inclusive, flexible, and globally competitive higher education ecosystem. While the policy presents transformative aspirations, successful implementation depends largely on the preparedness of higher education institutions (HEIs). This paper develops a conceptual framework integrating Institutional Readiness, Academic Innovation, and Sustainable Quality Enhancement (IASQ Framework) to explain how higher education institutions can effectively implement NEP 2020. Unlike studies that primarily describe policy provisions, this article proposes an original institutional model demonstrating the dynamic relationship between leadership, governance, faculty development, curriculum innovation, technology integration, student-centred learning, quality assurance, research culture, community engagement, and continuous improvement. The framework emphasizes that institutional transformation is not merely structural but cultural, requiring strategic leadership, collaborative governance, evidence-based planning, digital transformation, and sustainable quality mechanisms. The article further discusses implementation challenges, policy implications, and strategic



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	recommendations for universities and affiliated colleges. The proposed framework contributes to educational policy discourse by providing a comprehensive roadmap for assessing institutional readiness while promoting innovation and continuous quality enhancement in higher education.
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The NEP 2020 is more than an educational reform; it is a national vision to build a knowledge-driven, innovative, and globally competitive India. Replacing the 1986 policy after more than three decades, NEP 2020 seeks to transform higher education by promoting multidisciplinary learning, flexibility, research, innovation, technology integration, and quality. It emphasizes developing ethical, creative, and competent graduates who can contribute to national development while aligning Indian higher education with global standards. The success of NEP 2020, however, depends not merely on policy formulation but on effective institutional implementation. Higher education institutions must possess visionary leadership, committed faculty, robust governance, adequate infrastructure, and a culture that embraces innovation and continuous improvement. Institutional readiness is therefore the foundation of meaningful educational transformation.

To facilitate this transition, the **Institutional Readiness–Academic Innovation–Sustainable Quality Enhancement (IASQ) Framework** is proposed as a practical roadmap for NEP implementation. The framework is built on three interconnected pillars. **Institutional Readiness** focuses on strategic leadership, governance, faculty preparedness, digital infrastructure, financial sustainability, and organizational adaptability. **Academic Innovation** emphasizes curriculum redesign, interdisciplinary education, competency-based learning, experiential pedagogy, research integration, artificial intelligence, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurship. **Sustainable Quality Enhancement** promotes continuous improvement through IQAC, academic audits, stakeholder feedback, evidence-based decision-making, and a strong culture of quality. The framework recognises that educational transformation is not only structural but also cultural. While policies and infrastructure provide the foundation, lasting change depends on committed leadership, innovative faculty, responsive administration, and students who embrace inquiry, creativity, and lifelong learning.

Despite its transformative vision, NEP 2020 faces significant implementation challenges, including shortages of qualified faculty, limited financial and digital resources, weak research ecosystems, and institutional resistance to change. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts by governments, regulatory bodies, universities, industry, and society through increased investment in capacity building, research, digital infrastructure, and governance reforms. Nevertheless, the opportunities offered by NEP 2020 are substantial. Effective implementation can strengthen multidisciplinary education, research, innovation, employability, entrepreneurship, and international collaboration, enabling Indian universities to emerge as globally competitive institutions. Graduates



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will be better equipped with knowledge, skills, ethical values, and adaptability required for the twenty-first century.

The IASQ Framework provides institutional leaders with a systematic approach to assess readiness, prioritize reforms, foster academic innovation, and institutionalize continuous quality enhancement. It highlights that excellence is achieved through an integrated ecosystem where leadership, governance, faculty, students, technology, research, and quality assurance function collaboratively. Ultimately, NEP 2020 is not merely an education policy but a national roadmap for excellence, equity, innovation, and sustainable development. Its success will depend on the willingness of higher education institutions to translate policy into practice and embed a lasting culture of quality, innovation, and institutional excellence.

Conclusion

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** presents a transformative vision for higher education in India, but its success depends on how effectively institutions implement its reforms. The proposed **Institutional Readiness–Academic Innovation–Sustainable Quality Enhancement (IASQ) Framework** identifies institutional readiness as the foundation, academic innovation as the driver, and sustainable quality enhancement as the outcome of transformation. By integrating leadership, governance, faculty development, technology, curriculum innovation, research, and quality assurance, the framework offers both a conceptual model and a practical roadmap for institutional leaders. It also provides a foundation for future empirical research through measurable readiness indicators. As India moves toward a knowledge-driven economy, the IASQ Framework can support higher education institutions in achieving excellence, resilience, and global competitiveness while addressing national priorities and societal needs.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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