

Bridging Vision and Reality: Public Policy and the Implementation Gap in India's NEP 2020

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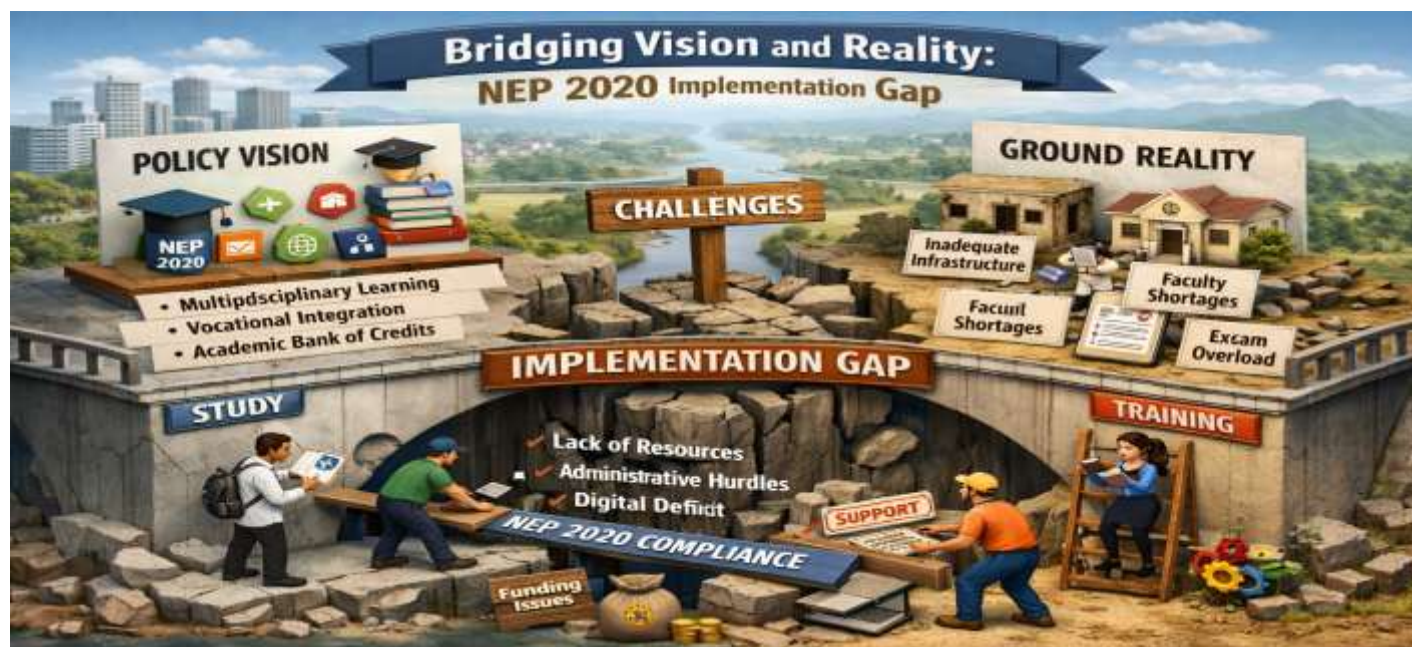
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ABSTRACT

The **National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)** represents one of the most ambitious educational reform initiatives undertaken in India in the past three decades. Conceived as a transformative framework, the policy seeks to restructure the Indian education system by promoting multidisciplinary learning, flexibility in academic pathways, integration of vocational education, and the adoption of technology-driven educational practices. However, the success of any public policy is determined not only by the clarity of its vision but also by the effectiveness of its implementation at the institutional level. This study examines the implementation of NEP 2020 within undergraduate colleges affiliated with the University, focusing on the gap between policy design and institutional execution. Employing a mixed-methods research design, the study draws on quantitative survey data and qualitative insights gathered from ten affiliated colleges—two urban and eight rural institutions. The findings reveal significant structural and administrative challenges that hinder effective implementation, including inadequate infrastructure, shortages of trained faculty, limited digital readiness, and an overburdened examination system. Furthermore, the study highlights the complexities of implementing national-level reforms within a federal governance structure where educational policy is centrally formulated but largely executed by state-level institutions. The analysis suggests that while NEP 2020 provides a visionary blueprint for educational transformation, its success depends heavily on institutional preparedness, sustained financial investment, and coordinated policy execution across governance levels. Bridging the implementation gap is therefore essential to realize the transformative potential envisioned by NEP 2020.



Keywords: National Education Policy 2020; Higher Education Reform; Policy Implementation; Academic Bank of Credits; Four-Year Undergraduate Programme; Multidisciplinary Education; Institutional Preparedness; Vocational Education Integration; Public Policy; West Bengal Higher Education.

Subject Classification

Disciplines: Education Policy and Administration, Higher Education Studies, Public Policy and Governance, Educational Reform and Development, **JEL Codes:** I28 – Education: Government Policy, I23 – Higher Education; Research Institutions, H75 – State and Local Government: Health, Education, Welfare, Z000 – Interdisciplinary Studies

INTRODUCTION

Education policies play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual, economic, and social development of nations. In a knowledge-driven global economy, higher education systems must continuously adapt to emerging technological, social, and economic demands. Recognizing these challenges, the Government of India introduced the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, which aims to transform the educational landscape through structural reforms, curriculum redesign, and institutional restructuring. NEP 2020 marks a departure from the long-standing framework established by earlier policies and attempts to create a holistic and multidisciplinary educational ecosystem. Among its key proposals are the **Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP)**, the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**, flexible entry and exit mechanisms, integration of vocational education, and the promotion of multidisciplinary universities. Despite the ambitious vision embedded in the policy, the process of translating national policy frameworks into institutional practice often encounters significant challenges. The field of public policy analysis has long recognized the existence of an **implementation gap**—the discrepancy between policy intentions and the outcomes achieved at the ground level. This gap is particularly pronounced in complex federal systems such as India, where the responsibility for education governance is shared between the Union and the States. The present study investigates the implementation of NEP 2020 in undergraduate colleges affiliated with the University of Burdwan in West Bengal. By focusing on institutional experiences at the micro level, the research seeks to understand how national policy reforms interact with local administrative capacities, resource constraints, and institutional cultures.

Rationale of the Study

While NEP 2020 outlines a comprehensive framework for educational transformation, its practical realization depends on institutional readiness and the availability of necessary resources. Many colleges, particularly those located in semi-urban and rural regions, operate within constrained financial and infrastructural environments. The introduction of complex reforms—such as multidisciplinary curricula and digital credit systems—requires not only conceptual acceptance but also operational capacity. The rationale for this study stems from the need to examine whether institutions possess the necessary infrastructure, human resources, and administrative mechanisms required for effective policy implementation. By analyzing the experiences of undergraduate colleges in West Bengal, this study contributes to broader discussions about public policy execution in India's higher education sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of educational policy implementation has attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly in developing countries where systemic reforms often encounter institutional constraints. Scholars have argued that educational policies frequently embody aspirational goals that are difficult to realize in practice due to structural limitations. NEP 2020 has been widely recognized as a visionary policy document designed to modernize India's education system (MHRD, 2020). It emphasizes multidisciplinary education, skill development, technological integration, and institutional autonomy. However, several scholars have questioned the feasibility of implementing such reforms across a highly diverse and resource-constrained educational landscape. Tilak (2019) critically examined the draft version of NEP and highlighted the financial

and institutional challenges associated with its implementation. Similarly, Kumari (2020) emphasized that teacher education and faculty training represent critical bottlenecks in realizing the policy's objectives. From a theoretical perspective, the concept of policy implementation has been extensively discussed in public policy literature. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) argued that implementation is inherently complex and often involves multiple actors, institutions, and decision-making layers. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) further developed a framework for analyzing implementation processes, emphasizing the importance of institutional capacity, policy clarity, and political support. In the Indian context, the federal structure of governance introduces additional complexity. While the central government formulates policy frameworks, state governments and universities are responsible for execution (Chauhan & Jaiswal, 2025). This multi-layered governance arrangement often results in delays, inconsistencies, and uneven policy adoption. Empirical studies conducted in West Bengal have also pointed to significant challenges in implementing NEP 2020. Banerjee (2023) observed that many institutions lack adequate infrastructure and faculty resources to support multidisciplinary education. Bag and Chattopadhyay (2024) further noted that teacher orientation programs remain insufficient, leading to confusion among educators regarding curriculum implementation. Overall, existing literature indicates that while NEP 2020 provides a progressive policy framework, its success depends heavily on institutional readiness and governance coordination.

Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on NEP 2020, several gaps remain in the existing scholarship:

Limited Micro-Level Institutional Studies Most studies focus on national or state-level policy discussions rather than institutional experiences.

Insufficient Examination of Implementation Gaps Few studies systematically analyze the divergence between policy objectives and actual implementation outcomes.

Neglect of Governance Dynamics The role of administrative coordination between universities, colleges, and government agencies remains underexplored.

Lack of Outcome-Based Evaluation There is limited empirical evidence assessing the practical consequences of NEP implementation for students and faculty.

This study seeks to address these gaps by conducting a focused analysis of undergraduate colleges affiliated with the University of The Country.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

To assess the awareness and preparedness of undergraduate colleges regarding NEP 2020.

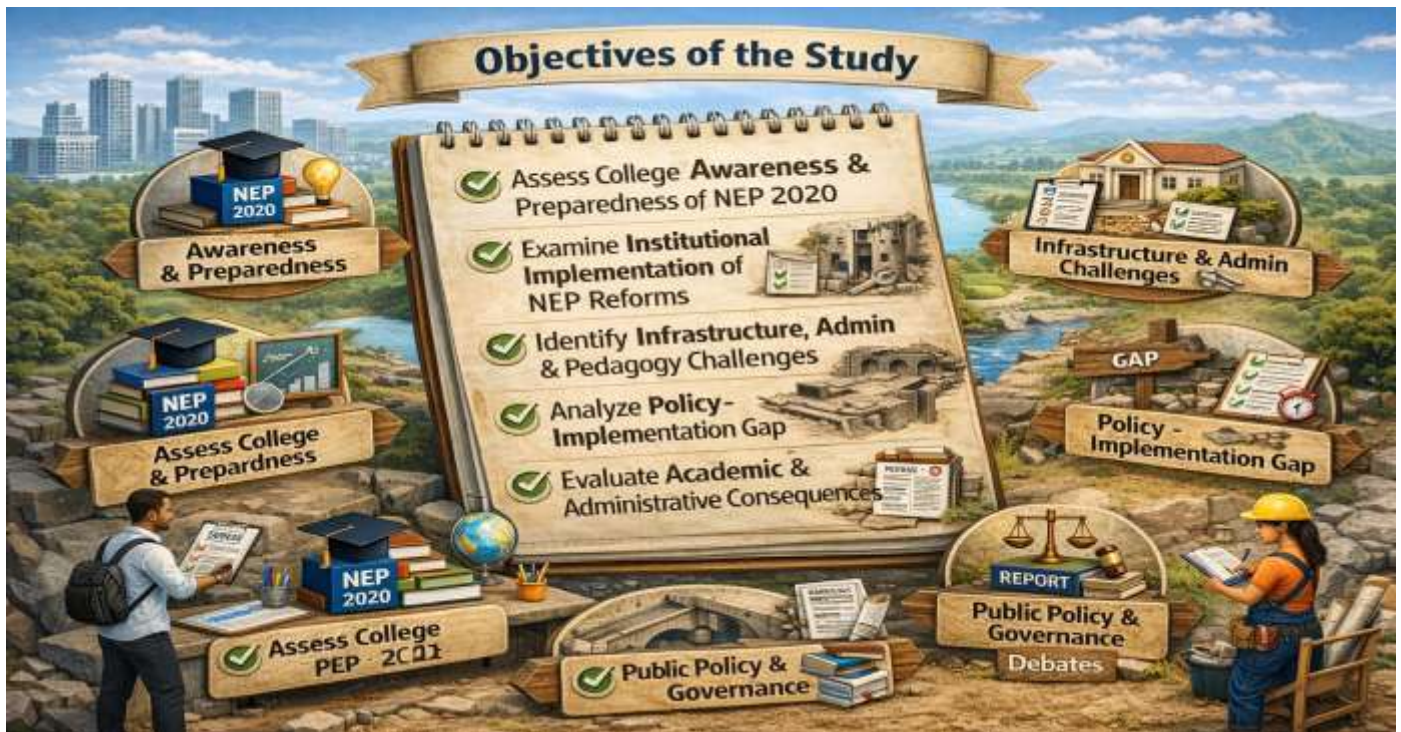
To examine the extent to which NEP reforms have been implemented at the institutional level.

To identify infrastructural, administrative, and pedagogical challenges in implementation.

To analyze the gap between policy objectives and institutional realities.

To evaluate the academic and administrative consequences of partial implementation.

To situate the findings within broader debates on educational governance and public policy.



To mathematically conceptualize “Bridging Vision and Reality: Public Policy and the Implementation Gap in India’s **National Education Policy 2020**”

1. Policy–Outcome Gap Model

Let

P = Intended policy outcomes (policy vision)

O = Observed institutional outcomes

G = Implementation gap

Then:

$$G = P - O$$

Interpretation:

$G = 0 \rightarrow$ Perfect policy implementation

$G > 0 \rightarrow$ Policy goals exceed actual outcomes

$G < 0 \rightarrow$ Institutional outcomes exceed expectations (rare)

2. Institutional Implementation Function

Policy outcomes depend on institutional capacity factors.

$$O = f(I, F, D, A)$$

Where:

I = Infrastructure capacity

F = Faculty availability and competence

D = Digital readiness

A = Administrative efficiency

Expanded as a weighted model:

$$O = \alpha I + \beta F + \gamma D + \delta A$$

Where

$$\alpha + \beta + \gamma + \delta = 1$$

These coefficients represent the relative importance of each factor in implementing NEP reforms.

3. Policy Implementation Efficiency Index

Implementation efficiency can be expressed as:

$$E = O/P$$

Where:

$E = 1 \rightarrow$ full realization of policy objectives

$E < 1 \rightarrow$ partial implementation

$E > 1 \rightarrow$ over-performance (rare)

4. Institutional Preparedness Index

Let institutional preparedness be a composite index:

$$IP = 0.25*[I + F + T + R]$$

Where:

I = Infrastructure score

F = Faculty strength

T = Teacher training readiness

R = Resource availability

5. Multidisciplinary Readiness Model

Since NEP promotes multidisciplinary learning:

$$M = 0.33*[S + C + L]$$

Where:

S = Number of academic streams offered

C = Cross-disciplinary courses

L = Laboratory / skill facilities

Higher M implies stronger multidisciplinary capacity.

6. Vocational Integration Model

NEP requires skill integration.

$$V = \eta T_v + \theta P + \kappa E$$

Where:

T_v = Availability of vocational trainers

P = Industry partnerships

E = Employability training programs

7. Governance Coordination Equation

Policy implementation depends on coordination among governance actors.

$$C_g = f(C_u, C_s, U, C_o)$$

Where:

C_u = Central government coordination

C_s = State government coordination

U = University administration

C_o = College administration

Expanded:

$$C_g = \lambda C_u + \mu C_s + \nu U + \xi C_o$$

8. Dynamic Implementation Model

Policy outcomes evolve over time:

$$O_{t+1} = O_t + \phi(I P_t - G_t)$$

Where:

t = time period

$I P_t$ = institutional preparedness at time t

This captures **gradual policy adjustment and institutional adaptation**.

9. Student Benefit Function

The ultimate goal is student outcomes.

$$B_s = \rho M + \sigma V + \tau D$$

Where:

Bs = student benefit index

M = multidisciplinary readiness

V = vocational integration

D = digital learning capacity

10. Composite NEP Implementation Index

Overall NEP implementation can be summarized as:

$$\text{NEPI} = \omega_1 \text{IP} + \omega_2 \text{M} + \omega_3 \text{V} + \omega_4 \text{Cg}$$

Where:

$$\omega_1 + \omega_2 + \omega_3 + \omega_4 = 1$$

This provides a quantitative framework to measure policy success.

Research Questions: Comparative Perspective: India and Sri Lanka

The study is designed to explore the practical realities of implementing higher education reforms in South Asia, with particular reference to the **National Education Policy 2020** in **India** and comparable higher education reform initiatives in **Sri Lanka**. Both countries have undertaken significant reforms aimed at modernizing their higher education systems by promoting multidisciplinary education, improving institutional autonomy, and strengthening skill-oriented learning. However, translating policy frameworks into institutional practice remains a complex process influenced by governance structures, resource availability and institutional capacity. To systematically examine the relationship between policy design and institutional practice, the following research questions guide the investigation.

Policy Interpretation and Institutional Understanding

How are higher education reforms such as NEP 2020 interpreted, understood, and communicated by college administrators, faculty members, and other institutional stakeholders in India and Sri Lanka? This question investigates the level of conceptual clarity and awareness regarding policy objectives among institutional actors. It examines whether administrators and faculty possess a clear understanding of the reforms and whether institutional communication mechanisms effectively disseminate policy information.

Institutional Response and Implementation Measures

What institutional measures have been undertaken by higher education institutions to implement policy reforms?

In the Indian context, this includes:

Implementation of the **Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP)**

Adoption of multidisciplinary curricula

Integration of vocational education

Operationalization of the **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**

In Sri Lanka, the question explores comparable reforms in curriculum modernization, interdisciplinary programs, and university governance.

Infrastructure and Administrative Constraints

What infrastructural, technological, or administrative barriers hinder effective policy implementation in higher education institutions across India and Sri Lanka?

The study investigates structural challenges such as:

Shortages of classrooms and laboratories

Limited digital infrastructure

Faculty shortages

Insufficient administrative support

Bureaucratic complexities within university governance systems

Understanding these barriers is crucial for identifying the factors that limit the successful execution of educational reforms.

Consequences of Partial or Uneven Implementation

What academic, administrative, and pedagogical consequences emerge from incomplete or uneven implementation of educational reforms?

The research evaluates whether partial implementation results in:

Academic inconsistencies across institutions

Increased administrative workload for faculty and administrators

Confusion among students regarding curriculum structures

Reduced effectiveness of multidisciplinary learning initiatives

Comparing experiences across institutions in India and Sri Lanka provides deeper insights into how policy implementation gaps affect educational outcomes.

Governance and Policy Implementation Gap

How does the implementation gap reflect broader governance challenges in higher education systems in India and Sri Lanka?

This question connects institutional experiences with larger public policy debates, particularly:

Federal governance dynamics in India

Centralized university governance structures in Sri Lanka

Coordination between governments, universities, and affiliated colleges

Institutional autonomy and accountability mechanisms

Together, these research questions enable a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between **policy intention and institutional practice**, which lies at the core of implementation studies in public policy and educational governance.

METHODOLOGY

1. Study Area

The empirical investigation focuses on undergraduate colleges affiliated with the **University of India**, with comparative references to institutional developments in **Sri Lanka**. Represents a significant regional higher education hub that supervises numerous affiliated colleges distributed across diverse socio-economic environments. These include urban institutions located in district centers as well as rural colleges operating under relatively limited infrastructural and financial conditions. This diversity provides an appropriate context for examining variations in institutional capacity, governance practices, and policy implementation outcomes. In comparative perspective, Sri Lanka's university system—largely coordinated through the **University Grants Commission, India and Sri Lanka**—provides an interesting contrast, as its universities operate under a more centralized governance structure compared to India's federal education system.

2. Research Design

The study adopts a **mixed-methods research design**, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Mixed-methods research enables the combination of statistical analysis with interpretive inquiry, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of complex institutional dynamics associated with policy implementation. In the context of higher education reforms in India and Sri Lanka, quantitative data alone cannot fully capture institutional experiences, while qualitative insights benefit from empirical statistical support.

The mixed-methods approach therefore enables the study to:

Measure awareness and implementation levels across institutions quantitatively

Interpret institutional experiences and perceptions qualitatively

Triangulate findings from multiple sources to improve reliability and validity

This methodological framework enhances the analytical robustness of the study and strengthens the credibility of its findings.

3. Sample Selection

Sampling Strategy

A **stratified random sampling technique** was used to ensure representation across different institutional contexts. Stratified sampling divides the population into subgroups based on relevant characteristics—in this case, geographic location (urban and rural institutions). This strategy ensures proportional representation of different institutional environments and reduces sampling bias.

Sample Composition (Comparative Institutional Context: India and Sri Lanka)

The study includes approximately ten undergraduate colleges affiliated with universities in **India**, with a comparative institutional perspective referencing universities in **Sri Lanka**. The primary empirical data for this research were collected from undergraduate colleges affiliated with **University of Burdwan in West Bengal, India**. These institutions represent a diverse academic environment encompassing both urban and rural settings. In order to provide a broader South Asian perspective on higher education policy implementation, the

institutional context is also examined in relation to universities governed by the **University Grants Commission Sri Lanka**, which oversees public universities in Sri Lanka. Although the empirical dataset focuses primarily on Indian institutions, comparative references help situate the findings within the wider regional higher education framework.

Institutional Distribution of Sample Colleges (India)

The study sample consists of approximately ten undergraduate colleges affiliated with universities in India.

Institutional Category	Number of Colleges
Urban Colleges	≈ 2
Semi-Urban Colleges	≈ 2
Rural Colleges	≈ 6
Total	≈ 10

Interpretation

The predominance of rural institutions in the sample reflects the structural characteristics of the affiliated college system in India, where a significant proportion of higher education institutions are located outside metropolitan areas. Rural colleges often operate under relatively constrained infrastructural and financial conditions, which makes them particularly relevant for studying the implementation challenges associated with major policy reforms such as the **National Education Policy 2020**.

These institutions frequently face challenges including:

Limited laboratory and classroom infrastructure

Shortage of permanent faculty members

Restricted access to digital learning technologies

Administrative constraints associated with centralized university examination systems

Consequently, the experiences of these colleges provide valuable insights into the practical realities of policy implementation.

Comparative University Context (India and Sri Lanka)

To better understand the institutional environment in which policy reforms are implemented, it is useful to consider the broader university systems in both countries.

Indicator	India	Sri Lanka
Governance Structure	Federal system (Central + State authorities)	Centralized national system
Regulatory Authority	University Grants Commission India	University Grants Commission Sri Lanka
Public Universities	~110+	~17
Affiliated Colleges	~40,000+	Limited (most universities are unitary)
Institutional Model	Large affiliated college system	Predominantly campus-based universities

Institutional Implications

The higher education systems of India and Sri Lanka differ significantly in their organizational structures. **India** operates a highly decentralized system in which universities supervise large networks of affiliated colleges. This structure creates complex administrative hierarchies that often slow down the implementation of

new educational policies. In contrast, **Sri Lanka's university system is more centralized**, with most universities functioning as autonomous campus-based institutions under the coordination of the national University Grants Commission. This centralized governance structure allows relatively faster policy coordination but may limit institutional flexibility.

Institutional Characteristics of Sample Colleges

The selected colleges exhibit diverse institutional characteristics that influence their capacity to implement policy reforms.

Institutional Feature	Observed Characteristics
Location	Urban, Semi-Urban, Rural
Student Population	1,000 – 5,000 students
Academic Streams	Arts, Commerce, Science
Governance	Affiliated college system
Digital Infrastructure	Uneven across institutions
Faculty Strength	Moderate to limited

These variations enable the study to analyze how institutional resources and governance contexts affect the implementation of higher education reforms.

Significance of the Sample Composition

The selected sample offers several advantages for analyzing policy implementation dynamics:

1. Representation of Diverse Institutional Contexts

The inclusion of both urban and rural colleges allows the research to capture disparities in infrastructure, faculty availability, and technological readiness.

2. Insight into Resource-Constrained Institutions

Since rural institutions form the majority of the sample, the research highlights challenges faced by colleges operating under limited resources.

3. Comparative Policy Perspective

By situating the findings within the broader context of higher education systems in India and Sri Lanka, the study contributes to comparative educational policy research in South Asia.

4. Relevance for Policy Implementation Studies

The sample reflects the realities of the affiliated college system, which is central to understanding how national educational reforms are translated into institutional practice.

Analytical Value of the Sample

The sample composition enables the study to address key questions regarding:

Institutional preparedness for educational reforms

Disparities between urban and rural institutions

Administrative challenges within affiliated college systems

Policy implementation dynamics in developing higher education systems

Through this empirical framework, the study provides valuable insights into how ambitious national policies are interpreted and operationalized within diverse institutional environments.

4. Participants

To obtain a comprehensive institutional perspective, the study collected data from multiple stakeholder groups involved in higher education governance and delivery.

Participants included:

College Principals Responsible for institutional leadership, administrative decision-making, and policy implementation.

Faculty Members Directly engaged in curriculum delivery, academic planning, and student mentoring.

Administrative Staff Responsible for operational functions such as academic records, examination management, and coordination of institutional processes.

Undergraduate Students Primary beneficiaries of educational reforms whose academic experiences provide valuable insights into the practical impact of policy changes.

Including multiple stakeholder groups enables the research to capture a wide range of institutional perspectives and experiences.

5. Data Collection Methods

To ensure methodological rigor and triangulation, the study employed multiple data collection methods.

Structured Questionnaires

Structured questionnaires were administered to faculty members and students to collect quantitative data related to:

Awareness of NEP 2020 reforms

Institutional preparedness for implementation

Experiences with revised curricular frameworks

Perceived benefits and challenges associated with reforms

Standardized questionnaires allow systematic statistical analysis and comparison across institutions.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with college principals and selected faculty members.

These interviews explored:

Institutional strategies for implementing policy reforms

Administrative challenges faced during implementation

Faculty perceptions regarding multidisciplinary education

Experiences with digital academic systems such as the Academic Bank of Credits

The semi-structured format allows participants to elaborate on their experiences while maintaining comparability across interviews.

Institutional Observations

Field observations were conducted during visits to selected colleges to examine:

Physical infrastructure

Classroom and laboratory facilities

Availability of digital learning technologies

Administrative processes related to curriculum implementation

Observation data provide contextual insights that complement survey and interview findings.

Review of Institutional Documents

Institutional records and administrative documents were reviewed to verify reported implementation measures.

These included:

Curriculum frameworks

Academic calendars

Examination schedules

Institutional policy circulars

Document analysis strengthens the reliability of research findings by validating self-reported data.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques.

Quantitative Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed using **descriptive statistical methods**, including:

Frequency distribution analysis

Percentage analysis

Comparative summaries across institutions

These statistical measures provide measurable indicators of awareness levels, institutional preparedness, and implementation progress.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations were analyzed using **thematic analysis**.

This process involved

Transcribing interview responses.

Identifying recurring themes and patterns.

Categorizing responses into major analytical themes such as infrastructure constraints, governance challenges, and pedagogical adaptation.

Interpreting findings within the theoretical framework of public policy implementation.

Thematic analysis enables deeper interpretation of institutional experiences and perceptions.

Methodological Validation and Research Rigor

Several methodological safeguards were adopted to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings.

Data Triangulation

Multiple data sources—questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis—were used to cross-verify findings.

Stratified Sampling

The sampling strategy ensures representation across diverse institutional contexts.

Mixed-Methods Integration

Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches enhances analytical depth.

Institutional Verification

Administrative records were examined to validate reported implementation measures.

Analytical Transparency

Clear documentation of data collection and analysis procedures ensures replicability.

Methodological Limitations

Despite the methodological rigor of the study, several limitations must be acknowledged.

The sample size is limited to ten colleges, which may restrict broader generalization.

The research focuses primarily on a single university system in India, with comparative references to Sri Lanka.

Educational reforms such as NEP 2020 are still evolving, and their long-term institutional impacts may not yet be fully observable.

Nevertheless, the study provides valuable insights into the micro-level dynamics of educational policy implementation in South Asian higher education systems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Preparedness: The findings reveal that most colleges were not adequately prepared for the rapid implementation of NEP reforms. While administrators expressed support for the policy's vision, many institutions lacked the resources necessary to operationalize the reforms. **Infrastructure Constraints:** Many colleges reported shortages of classrooms, laboratories, and digital infrastructure. These deficiencies significantly limit the ability to introduce multidisciplinary courses or technology-based learning environments. **Faculty Shortages and Training Gaps:** The FYUGP structure requires greater faculty

specialization and interdisciplinary teaching. However, many institutions face persistent faculty shortages. Additionally, training programs for teachers remain limited and sporadic. Limitations of Multidisciplinary Education: The lack of diverse faculty expertise restricts the development of genuinely multidisciplinary curricula. As a result, students often rely on self-learning or external coaching to fulfill course requirements. Challenges in Academic Bank of Credits (ABC): The implementation of the digital credit system requires advanced administrative and technological infrastructure. Many institutions reported difficulties in maintaining digital records and coordinating credit transfers. Vocational Education Constraints: Although NEP emphasizes skill development, colleges lack specialized training facilities. In many cases, vocational courses are delivered through external providers using pre-recorded online content, limiting practical engagement. Examination System Overload: The frequent examination schedule under the semester-based FYUGP system has created administrative strain. Faculty members reported reduced teaching time due to continuous examination responsibilities.

Policy Implications

The findings highlight several important implications for educational policy:

Institutional capacity must be strengthened before large-scale reforms are introduced.

Financial investment in infrastructure and faculty development is essential.

Greater coordination is required between central and state governments.

Policy implementation strategies should account for regional disparities in institutional resources.

CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 represents one of the most ambitious educational reform initiatives undertaken in India. Its vision of a flexible, multidisciplinary, and technology-enabled higher education system reflects global trends in educational transformation.

However, the findings of this study demonstrate that policy ambition alone is insufficient to guarantee successful reform. The experience of undergraduate colleges affiliated with the University illustrates the substantial challenges involved in translating policy vision into institutional practice.

Without adequate infrastructure, trained faculty, and administrative capacity, the transformative goals of NEP 2020 risk remaining aspiration rather than operational. Bridging the implementation gap therefore requires sustained financial investment, institutional capacity-building, and collaborative governance across multiple levels of the education system.

Ultimately, successful educational reform must balance visionary policymaking with pragmatic implementation strategies that recognize the realities of institutional environments.

Declarations

Author Contributions: All authors made substantial, meaningful, and collaborative contributions to the present study. This includes the initial conception and design of the research framework; development and validation of the methodological approach; systematic analysis and interpretation of results; and drafting, critical revision, and final preparation of the manuscript. Each author has actively participated throughout the research process, has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript, and agrees to be fully accountable for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of the work, ensuring that any questions related to the content are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests, professional affiliations, personal relationships, or other circumstances that could be perceived as having influenced, or potentially influenced, the research process, interpretation of findings, or conclusions reported in this manuscript.

Data Availability: The data supporting the findings and analyses presented in this study were obtained exclusively from publicly available and openly accessible sources. No proprietary, confidential, restricted, or private datasets were used. All data sources have been appropriately acknowledged, and the study adheres to principles of transparency and reproducibility.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval: Not applicable. The research reported in this manuscript did not involve human participants, animal subjects, clinical trials, or experimental procedures that would require review, approval, or oversight by an Institutional Review Board or Ethics Committee.

Informed Consent: Not applicable. This study did not involve human participants, human subjects research, or the collection or use of identifiable personal, sensitive, or private data.

Ethics Statement: The authors affirm that the research presented in this manuscript has been conducted in full compliance with established ethical standards of academic integrity, responsible research conduct, and scholarly publication. The study does not raise any ethical, legal, or regulatory concerns and conforms to internationally accepted norms and best practices in research and publication ethics.

AI Assistance Disclosure: The authors disclose that artificial intelligence-based tools, including ChatGPT, were utilized exclusively for language enhancement, grammatical correction, stylistic refinement, and formatting support. These tools were not used for generating scientific hypotheses, data analysis, interpretation of results, or formulation of conclusions. The intellectual content, scientific accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript remain entirely the responsibility of the authors.

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