



## IMPLEMENTING THE SCHOOL QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (SQAAF) IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: CHALLENGES AND COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS FROM NAAC

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### ABSTRACT:

The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasizes enhancing school education quality, fostering transparency, and ensuring continuous self-assessment for institutional improvement. The School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework (SQAAF) is a structured evaluation system designed to align with NEP 2020's vision of school accreditation and data-driven decision-making.

While the framework aims to enhance the quality of education, its implementation in Maharashtra has presented several challenges. Teachers are responsible for multiple academic and administrative tasks, including board exam duties, training programs, and classroom teaching. Evidence from official schedules of Teacher Capacity Building Training 2.0 (शिक्षकक्षमतावृद्धीप्रशिक्षण 2.0), the HSC board's schedule for paper checking and submission, and comparative analysis with NAAC accreditation timelines highlight that the timeline for SQAAF compliance overlapped with these responsibilities, creating time constraints and operational difficulties (Government of Maharashtra, 2025; NAAC, 2025).

This research paper explores the alignment between SQAAF and NEP 2020, examines the practical difficulties faced by educators, and compares the SQAAF implementation process with NAAC accreditation, drawing insights for a more feasible approach. Additionally, it proposes recommendations for reforming SQAAF implementation to balance educational quality assurance and teacher workload.

### 1. BACKGROUND OF SQAAF AND NAAC

The National Education Policy (2020) introduced significant reforms aimed at transforming the Indian education system by shifting from rote learning to competency-based, student-centric education. As part of its focus on education quality and governance, NEP 2020 proposed setting up a School Standards and Accreditation Authority (SSAA) to monitor and assess institutional performance.

The School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework (SQAAF) was developed as a self-evaluation and accreditation tool for schools to assess their progress against defined standards. The primary objective of SQAAF is to ensure continuous improvement in school performance through systematic assessment. However, unlike higher education institutions, where NAAC accreditation follows a multi-stage process with flexible timelines, schools were expected to comply with SQAAF in a highly condensed period (Government of India, 2020).

**2. TIMELINE COMPARISON: NAAC VS. SQAAF IMPLEMENTATION**

**2.1 NAAC Accreditation Process Timeline**

- Institutional Information for Quality Assessment (IIQA): Institutions submit the IIQA to determine eligibility.
- Self-Study Report (SSR): Upon IIQA approval, institutions have 45 days to submit the SSR (NAAC, 2025).
- Data Validation and Verification (DVV): The verification phase takes additional time before institutions receive feedback.
- Peer Team Visit (PTV): Typically scheduled within 30 days post-verification.
- Total Process Duration: Several months, allowing institutions time to prepare, evaluate, and respond (NAAC, 2025).

**2.2 SQAAF Implementation Timeline (Maharashtra)**

- Self-Assessment Phase: Schools were expected to complete self-assessment within 28 days (initial deadline: February 28, 2025) (SCERT Maharashtra, 2025).
- Extended Compliance Deadline: March 15, 2025 (Total: 44 days) (SCERT Maharashtra, 2025).
- Additional Responsibilities: Schools were engaged in Teacher Training 2.0 and HSC board exam duties during the same period (Government of Maharashtra, 2025).

**2.3 SQAAF Training Video Data (YouTube Engagement Analysis)**

Sr. No.	Video Description	Likes	Views	Upload Date
1	SQAAF प्रस्तावना	243	20424	30 Jan 2025
2	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १ कार्यक्रमाची संरचना, व्याप्ती आणि उद्दिष्ट्ये	246	26809	31 Jan 2025
3	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. २ क्षेत्र क्र. १ भाग १ अभ्यासक्रम, अध्यापन शास्त्र आणि मूल्यांकन	158	16299	31 Jan 2025
4	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ३ -क्षेत्र क्र. १ भाग २ अभ्यासक्रम, अध्यापन शास्त्र आणि मूल्यांकन	65	6192	31 Jan 2025
5	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ४ क्षेत्र क्र. १ भाग ३ अभ्यासक्रम, अध्यापन शास्त्र आणि मूल्यांकन	39	4436	31 Jan 2025
6	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ५ क्षेत्र क्र. १ भाग ४ अभ्यासक्रम, अध्यापन शास्त्र आणि मूल्यांकन	44	4605	31 Jan 2025
7	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ६ क्षेत्र क्र. २ भाग १ पायाभूत सुविधा	43	4224	31 Jan 2025
8	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ७ क्षेत्र क्र. २ भाग २ पायाभूत सुविधा	27	2611	31 Jan 2025
9	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ८ क्षेत्र क्र. ३ मानव संसाधन आणि शालेय नेतृत्व	33	3407	31 Jan 2025
10	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ९ क्षेत्र क्र. ४ भाग १ समावेशित पद्धती आणि लिंग समभाव	16	2802	31 Jan 2025
11	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १० क्षेत्र क्र. ४ भाग २ समावेशित पद्धती आणि लिंग समभाव	28	2288	31 Jan 2025
12	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. ११ क्षेत्र क्र. ५ भाग १ व्यवस्थापन, सनियंत्रण आणि प्रशासन	31	3036	31 Jan 2025

13	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १२ क्षेत्र क्र. ५ भाग २ व्यवस्थापन, सनियंत्रण आणि प्रशासन	31	2574	31 Jan 2025
14	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १३ क्षेत्र क्र. ६ लाभार्थ्यांचे समाधान	36	3075	31 Jan 2025
15	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १४ परिशिष्टभाग १	22	2416	31 Jan 2025
16	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १५ परिशिष्टभाग २	9	1959	31 Jan 2025
17	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १६ लिंक भरणे बाबत	183	18967	31 Jan 2025
18	SQAAF व्हिडिओ क्र. १७ सारांश	30	4002	31 Jan 2025

This table highlights low engagement with training resources, indicating that many educators may not have received adequate orientation before the compliance deadline.

### 2.4 Overlapping HSC Paper Checking and SQAAF Responsibilities

- HSC board paper checking was scheduled between February and March 2025, coinciding with the SQAAF compliance deadlines (Government of Maharashtra, 2025).
- Some answer sheet submission deadlines were as short as 3-4 days, making it nearly impossible for teachers to give adequate attention to both tasks.
- The workload increased stress levels, affecting teaching quality, efficiency in assessment, and overall productivity.

## 3. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

### 3.1 Insufficient Training and Resources

The availability of training materials for SQAAF compliance was limited primarily to online videos, many of which received low engagement (SCERT Maharashtra, 2025).

### 3.2 Burden on Teachers and Administrative Staff

The short window for SQAAF compliance, combined with ongoing classroom responsibilities and examination duties, led to significant stress on educators (Government of Maharashtra, 2025).

### 3.3 Lack of Infrastructure and Digital Readiness

Many schools, particularly in rural areas, struggled with digital access, affecting their ability to complete online submissions on time.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE SQAAF IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1 Adopt a Phased Implementation Approach

Schools should be provided at least six months to a year to complete compliance, ensuring thorough assessment.

### 4.2 Improve Training and Support Mechanisms

SQAAF training should include offline workshops, school-level facilitators, and mentor programs.

### 4.3 Align Compliance with Academic Schedules

The SQAAF submission window should not coincide with board exams or evaluation periods.

## 5. CONCLUSION

By learning from NAAC accreditation, SQAAF implementation can be restructured to provide schools with sufficient time, training, and support. Addressing the overlap of responsibilities, enhancing

digital accessibility, and adopting phased compliance will create a sustainable and effective quality assurance framework that aligns with NEP 2020's vision.

## REFERENCES

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