ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This abstract provides an overview of the critical role of academic leadership and governance in higher education institutions. As the landscape of higher education undergoes profound transformations, academic leaders and governance structures play a pivotal role in shaping the direction, quality, and effectiveness of educational institutions. This abstract highlights key themes, challenges, and considerations related to academic leadership and governance, emphasizing the need for adaptability, transparency, and inclusivity in the decision-making processes. The abstract begins by acknowledging the evolving nature of higher education and the increasing complexity of issues facing institutions, including technological advancements, changing student demographics, and shifting funding models. It underscores the central importance of academic leadership and governance in addressing these challenges and promoting institutional excellence.

Key words: High Education Institution, Governance, Research Management, High Education System, Academic Profession, International Research Collaboration

Introduction

Academic leadership and governance in higher education refer to the management and decision-making processes within universities and colleges. These institutions are typically complex organizations with various stakeholders, including faculty, administrators, students, and governing boards. Effective leadership and governance are crucial for the success and advancement of higher education institutions. To

find academic articles on this topic, you can follow these steps:Use Academic Databases: Access academic databases like JSTOR, ProQuest, Google Scholar, or your institution's library resources. These databases contain a vast collection of scholarly articles and research papers related to higher education leadership and governance.

Search Terms: Use specific keywords to narrow down your search. For example, you can use terms like "academic leadership," "higher education governance," "university administration," or "academic leadership models. "Peer-Reviewed Journals: Look for articles published in peer-reviewed journals as they are generally considered more reliable and rigorous. You can often filter search results to show only peer-reviewed articles. Citations: When you find a relevant article, check its citations to see if there are other papers that might be of interest. This can lead you to a network of related research.

University Libraries: Your university's library might have a dedicated section or librarian specializing in education and higher education research. They can provide you with valuable guidance and access to resources. Professional Organizations: Explore websites of professional organizations related to higher education, such as the American Council on Education (ACE) or the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). These organizations often publish research and reports on leadership and governance in higher education. Open Access Journals: Consider looking for open-access journals and repositories that offer free access to scholarly articles on higher education topics. Remember that the field of academic leadership and governance in higher education is continually evolving, so it's a good idea to check for the most recent research to stay updated on current trends and best practices in this area.

Key themes explored

1. *Leadership Models:* Various leadership models exist within higher education, from traditional hierarchies to collaborative and distributed leadership. This abstract examines these models and their implications for decision-making and innovation.

2. *Governance Structures:* Effective governance structures ensure accountability, transparency, and shared governance among stakeholders. This abstract discusses the role of boards of trustees, faculty senates, and administrative leadership in the governance of higher education institutions.

3. *Challenges and Opportunities:* The abstract highlights common challenges faced by academic leaders and governance bodies, such as balancing financial sustainability with academic excellence, fostering diversity and inclusion, and responding to external pressures. It also underscores opportunities for innovation and improvement.

4. *Inclusivity and Diversity:* The importance of inclusive decision-making processes that reflect the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and community members, is emphasized. Strategies for promoting inclusivity are explored.

5. *Ethical Considerations:* The abstract touches upon the ethical responsibilities of academic leaders and governance bodies, including issues related to academic freedom, integrity, and institutional values.

6. *Adaptability and Future Outlook:* The dynamic nature of higher education requires leaders and governance structures to be adaptable and forward-thinking. The abstract discusses strategies for anticipating and responding to future challenges.

The major issue in front of all of us is how to raise the quality and standards of Indian higher education and make it globally competitive and locally relevant. In this context, governance and leadership of higher education institutions needs major revamping in order to compete with the best universities globally. Reforming the system of governance and leadership of higher education is one of the most important parts of the transformative agenda of the National Education Policy-2020. The NEP envisions reforms in governance as a requisite of achieving the targets and goals of education in coming years. The governance reforms agenda consists of a number of proposals of structuring and restructuring of governance structures.[1]

Learning Outcomes

Explain the concepts of governance and leadership in the context of higher education. Suggest measures necessary for fulfilling the NEP requirements regarding governance and leadership in higher education institutions. Develop a strategy for betterment of local governance. Develop a plan for moving towards autonomy. Specify the role expected from the Board of Governors in the perspective of the NEP.

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1   *https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/35747684.pdf*

Governance and Leadership

Governance refers to the structure and processes of decision-making. Governance becomes effective and improves institutional performance when decisions are translated into operational practices accompanied by accountability measures at the institutional level. The concept of 'good governance' underlines the qualitative dimension of governance indicating effective, efficient, participative form of government responsible for transparent and accountable management of re-sources.

Leadership has many definitions, and while some define leadership as a group process (involving coordination of collective action to attain group goals), others define it as an influence process (exerting social influence to maximize group efforts to attain goals). Still, others see leadership as the 'instrument' for achievement of goals. In the realm of higher education, leadership and governance are considered highly contested terms. A vice-chancellor is a leader of the university who upholds and maintains social responsibility, formal rationality and procedural legitimacy. Leadership and governance are not mutually exclusive terms, as good governance implies effective leadership; nevertheless, leadership has an emotional dimension and a leader while facilitating practices, influences and motivates people.[2]

Context: Concerns and Challenges

The governance and management of higher education institutions is becoming increasingly complex against the backdrop of the expansion and diversification of higher education taking place globally and in India (Malik, 2017). Governance of higher education institutions is essential to fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of quality education. The proposals of reforming educational governance through restructuring existing structures or creating new structures of governance recommended under the National Education Policy-2020 can play an important role in improving the functioning of the higher education system.

Based on the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, autonomy and accountability, the NEP envisages higher education system in India to move to-wards an output and outcome-based model. There is also a move to strengthen higher education institutions, and all efforts are being made for developing robust institutions by strong governance and effective leadership. It is often observed that India has an over-regulated and under-governed higher education system.

2   *Chandra, Pankaj (2012). 'Governance in Higher Education: A Contested Space: Making*

The government is therefore taking multiple initiatives for NEP-2020 implementation and the plan for the overhaul of higher education involves its structural re-organisation into an ecosystem of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, good governance and able leadership. NEP proposes to have only three types of higher education institutions: Research-intensive Universities, Teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges.

Expectations from Leadership for Implementation of NEP

HEIs are increasingly becoming difficult places to govern, manage and lead due to the growing contestations on campus and ideological divides. Industry, civil society, community and government interests frequently diverge and middle paths have to necessarily be carved out. Effective academic leadership in higher education is a function of several factors or characteristics. These include: leadership in teaching, leadership in research, strategic vision and networking, collaborative and motivational leadership, fair and efficient management, and the development and recognition of performance and interpersonal skills (Ramsden, 1998).

There have been increasing challenges of leading educational institutions, in the wake of changes in the role of educational leaders and organizational practices, and the volatility in higher education scenario. The National Education Policy, 2020 has flagged the theme of leadership as central to bring about the desired changes in Higher Education (see Box 15.1). There is a need to build performance culture with institutional development along with creativity and innovation under the leadership of a visionary leader. All these can be achieved with institutional arrangements for leadership development at the national level with scholars from top international institutions of higher learning across the globe.

Leaders of an HEI will Demonstrate Strong Alignment to Constitution

values and the overall vision of the institution, along with attributes such as a strong social commitment, belief in teamwork, pluralism, ability to work with diverse people, and a positive outlook. The selection shall be carried out by the BoG (Board of Governors) through a rigorous, impartial, merit-based, and competency-based pro-cess led by an Eminent Expert Committee (EEC) constituted by the BoG. Leadership succession will be planned with care to ensure that good

practices that define an institution's processes do not end due to a change in leadership; leadership changes will come with sufficient overlaps, and not remain vacant, in order to ensure smooth transitions. Outstanding leaders will be identified and developed for leadership positions.[3]

Roles of Leadership in Promoting Academic Excellence and Administrative Efficiency

Most of the research on leadership in higher education has focused on the holders of formal academic management roles, such as Vice-Chancellors/Principals, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans and Heads of Department. Breakwell and Tytherleigh (2008) studied the leadership of VCs in UK universities, identifying the characteristics, i.e. academic credibility, financial awareness, adaptability, confidence, strong persona, and sense of mission, strategy and/or vision. There is however a tension between 'academic leadership' which is actually about the leadership of academic institutions rather than leadership of academic work.

Administrative leadership includes all leadership roles and responsibilities existing within higher educational institutions that are not explicitly related to leading the academic core. Decisions about the creation, implementation, and improvement of the curriculum pertain to academic leadership, other decisions to be made, conflicts to be resolved, and consensuses built outside strictly academic matters rest with administrative leadership (see Box 15.2). Moreover, academic communities, both students and faculties are more diverse than ever coming from various socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, academic leaders and administrators need to enable and endorse a wider community interaction.

There is a need to establish Academic Leadership Centres for training current vice-chancellors and registrars, as well as the potential vice-chancellors and registrars, and any other positions of leadership which focus on the following areas:

Recent reform initiatives in higher education:

Widening access, equity and diversity in higher education quality in higher education: accreditation and ranking improving teaching-

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3   *Breakwell, G. and Tytherleigh, M. (2008). The Characteristics, Roles and Selection of Vice-Chancellors. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.*

learning and technology in higher education enhancing learning outcomes and employability.

Financing options and strategies for resource mobilizationmanaging autonomy and accountability in higher educationdeveloping research capacity in higher educationinternationalization and globalization of higher education leadership: strategic planning and managementThe potential vice-chancellors and registrars may be selected on strict selection criteria and they may be trained at both the Indian and foreign collaborating universities. This effort will infuse the performance culture among the leading research universities[4].

The leadership training will have the following objectives:

a. To provide orientation to senior academic colleagues for visionary leadership and strategic planning of institutions and sectoral under-standing.

b. To enable senior academic colleagues to lead the academic as well as administrative teams, diverse workforce, through positive work culture.

c. To facilitate senior academic colleagues to deal with leadership challenges.

d. To bring in performance culture and efficiency in institutions in In-dia.

e. To facilitate innovation and creativity in research, teaching and learning, and overall effectiveness of the Institutions.

f. To explore technology for both deeper engagement and wider de-livery.

While these strategies are for research intensive and teaching universalities, at the college level, there can also be leadership training for college principals under central universities, and college principals under state universities (NIEPA, 2020)

An Initiative for leadership development leaders

There are initiatives in two components of the flagship scheme Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers & Teaching (PMMMNMTT). These are the Centre of Academic Leadership and Edu-cation Management (CALEM), and the Leadership for Academicians

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4   *Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (2020). National Education Policy 2020. New Delhi: Government of India.*

Programme (LEAP) to identify and groom senior faculty for leadership positions. These should be strengthened further and also evaluated to assess how effective they have been in training leaders for the next level.

Governance in Indian Higher Education

University governance can be viewed from both broader and narrower perspectives wherein a broader perspective examines changing relationship between the state and the market and a narrower perspective which defines university governance as the forms and processes through which universities govern their affairs (Kwiek, 2015). Thus, governance includes both external governance that refers to the relationship between individual higher education institutions and the state and internal governance that refers to the relationship between different lines of au-throaty within the institutions. Hence analysis of governance must include analysis of the processes at different levels, 'external' and 'internal'[5].

External New Public Management involves introducing contracts, strategic planning, and performance evaluations with the focus being on performance and out-come-based measures instead of being determined by inputs. Moreover, institutional autonomy can be enhanced by transforming the role of government from command and control to a steering and evaluative role. Institutional autonomy should principally lie in selection of students, appointment and promotion of teachers, determination of courses, pedagogy, assessment, areas of research and use of resources. The NEP expects that the capacity of the higher education sys-tem to govern itself by widespread and coordinated regulatory reform should be improved.

Institutional autonomy and public accountability, along with other established trends in higher education governance have started having a long-term impact on the relationship between the state and the institution. Governments have centralised their powers in their relationships with the universities through performance-based accountability; research funding mechanisms; quality assurance; and various administrative mechanisms. These control mechanisms have assumed different forms from previous legal regulations, and exert a more intensive and stronger influence on the university than legal regulations.

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5   *National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) (2020). NEP 2020: Implementation Strategies. New Delhi: NIEPA.*

New Governing Structures for Higher Education Visualised by the NEP

There are a number of proposals relating to reforms in governance of higher edu-cation in India in NEP-2020. The proposals of reforming governance of higher education relate to all the three levels of governance of higher education; i.e. un-ion, state and institutional levels. The policy proposes the creation of many new structures of governance. All of these shall have important bearing on the existing structures. Similarly, there will be urgent need for harmonising the institutional level structures and process, state level structure and process of governance and the national level context.

We observe state control is giving way to institutional management and the role of government is evolving into incentives and sanctions where it 'steers from a distance'. Moreover, in keeping with the global trend the NEP aims to restructure the higher education system, and create world class multidisciplinary higher edu-cation institutions supporting faculty and institutional autonomy with light but tight regulations.

The NEP proposes transforming the regulatory system by setting up a single regulator as Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) with four verticals for regulation [National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)], accreditation [National Accreditation Council (NAC)], funding [Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC)] and academic standard setting [General Education Council (GEC)]. The basic idea behind creating a single regulator is to mitigate the problems of over regulation in higher and professional education. Secondly, it also in-tends to minimize the overlap between different regulating agencies.[6] As per the NEP there will also be professional councils, such as the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), Veterinary Council of India (VCI), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Council of Architecture (CoA), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) and the like will play a key role in the higher education system and will act as Professional Standard Setting Bodies.

Transparency in Governance: A case

The Indira Gandhi National Open University takes steps for ensuring transparency in governance. A few of these Involving

6   Varghese, N.V. and Garima Malik (2020). 'Governance and Autonomy in Higher Educa-tion'. International Seminar Report, CPRHE/NIEPA: New Delhi.

sharing of information with the stakeholders includes steps like the following:Composition of all statutory bodies and all decisions of these bodies are shared using the IGNOU website; updated information related to academic programmes and learner support is shared with learners, and concerned functionaries; teaching and other academic positions are advertised nationwide as per UGC norms, with clearly spelt out eligibility criteria and screening procedure.

Moving towards Institutional Autonomy in Higher Education

There have been conflicts between allocation of resources by the state and the actual needs of the higher education sector. As a result, due to competitive pressures, institutions are compelled to generate additional resources.[7] The increasing global competitiveness through 'rankings', 'quality upgradation', etc. are more focused on bringing quantifiable parameters into the higher education sector. Academic autonomy has not been getting adequate attention at par with other quantifiable parameters related to graduate outcomes. Academic autonomy and freedom should however be the key component of the institutional governance structure of the institutions.

There should be more democratic functioning within the university hierarchy, including empowering university deans and giving more autonomy to departments. Also, the responsibility for course regulation, examinations and degree awards should be given to colleges so that universities can focus on postgraduate pro-grams and research. Revisiting acts and memorandum of associations and strong institutional leadership would all go a long way to increase and protect autonomy of higher education institutions.

HEIs will display commitment to institutional excellence, engagement with their local communities, and the highest standards of financial probity and accountability. Each institution will make a strategic Institutional Development Plan (IDP) on the basis of which institutions will develop initiatives, assess their own progress, and reach the goals set therein, which could then become the basis for further public funding.

The Institutional Development Plan shall be prepared with the joint participation of Board members, institutional leaders, faculty, students, and staff What is essential to understand is not just the granting of autonomy but how such autonomy is to be implemented. In terms of

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7   Ramsden, Paul (1998). *Managing the Effective University. Higher Education Research and Development*, 17(3), pp. 347–70

within University relations we need to examine the nature of internal governance structures i.e. whether decision making is centralized or participatory and how much of the autonomy given to the universities is passed on to the teachers or is it highly centralized in the Institutional Development Plans and Perspectives Plans should be pre-pared to strategize on a vision for 2035.

As part of these plans institutional leaders should identify key areas of research focus and also strategies to achieve teaching excellence. Best practices must be studied in higher education institutions (HEIs) globally and in India. Faculty governance should be encouraged so they have a say in matters of running the institution. Junior faculty particularly should be also involved in Academic Council, Senate and Boards of Management.

The Role of Board of Governors in HEIs

Leadership and governance influence all aspects of institutions. A governance structure in a university in India consists of a Board of Governors/Governing Board (GB) chaired by the Chancellor who may be the Governor in case of state universities, a nominee of an eminent academics by the government in Central universities, a Syndicate, a Senate, an Academic Council, a finance Independent Board of Governors is a step in this direction of strengthening institutional governance. Through a suitable system of graded accreditation and graded autonomy, and in a phased manner over a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellenceOver a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing Institutions pursuing innovation and excellence. Measures will be taken at all HEIs to ensure leadership of the highest quality and promote an institutional culture of excellence.[8]

Upon receiving the appropriate graded accreditations that deem the institution ready for such a move, a Board of Governors (BoG) shall be established consisting of a group of highly qualified, competent, and dedicated individuals having proven capabilities. The BoG of an institution will be empowered to govern the institution free of any external interference, make all appointments including that of head of the institution, and take all decisions regarding governance. New members of the Board should be identified by an expert commit-tee appointed by the Board Equity considerations should be taken

8   *https://www.oecd.org/education/imhe/46064461.pdf*

care of while selecting the members. All HEIs should aim to become autonomous, self-regulating entities and have such an empowered BoG by 2035. Boards should have a balance of distinguished members from the academic community, industry and alumni. The size of the Board should not become unwieldy so a size of 10-15 members should be appropriate. Best practices of IITs and IIMs with independent governing boards may be studied.

Conclusion

The governance and leadership in higher education in India and dwelled upon much needed changes in governance structures and leadership strategies as proposed in NEP-2020. In India the external quality assurance agencies, internal quality assurance mechanisms and the ranking of higher education institutions are examples of increasing accountability measures. The new reform measures such as graded autonomy and funding mechanisms pose further challenges to guide and direct institutions of higher education. A growing consensus seems to be emerging towards granting of more autonomy, increasing accountability measures, participation of faculty and students in institutional decision making process. However, the performance of higher education institutions in India as measured on quality parameters, will in future determine the extent of autonomy and the level of regulatory scrutiny they will face. This has important implications for leadership and governance. The unit also suggests strategies for faculty and leaders to meet out the policy expectations most effectively and efficiently. To conclude, this unit will help faculty and leadership better understand the vision of NEP-2020 and move forwards in that direction.

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