



STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION –A STUDY

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Abstract: The government of India came out with a national education policy (NEP) 2020 which has set the strategic direction for higher and technical education in the country for the next 15 years to 20 years. The policy initiatives can only achieve its goals through detailed strategic, perspective, and yearly planning at the national, state, university, and institute levels. The strategic human resource management practices need to be designed which are integrated into provisions of the national policy of education and plans of implementation. The strategic human resource management practices need to be implemented in an integrated manner to reap the fruits of the national policy of education.

The faculty motivation in higher education institutions (HEIs) is low because of various reasons such as lack of autonomy, poor compensation, absence of a motivational environment, overloading of administrative work, delay in promotion, promotion is not based on performance, traditional leadership at institute level, inadequate laboratories and infrastructure, shortage of faculty members and the like. The causes of lack of motivation and demotivation need to be addressed to make them capable, committed, and satisfied. The NEP 2020 has also recognized this issue and suggested remedies.

Section 10 of National Education Policy 2020 states about institutional restructuring and consolidation of higher education systems. It recommends large multidisciplinary universities and higher education institution clusters should be the structure of higher education. It also states about granting graded autonomy to the colleges. Higher education will be an integrated education system embracing professional and vocational education.

Section 12 of National Education Policy 2020 states optimal learning environment and support for students will be created in the institute for the holistic development of the students.

The current paper describes the analysis of provisions of the NEP 2020 and strategic human resource management practices (SHRMPs) requirement at the university level. Recommendations are made to design and implement SHRMPs at the national and HEIs level.

Keywords: National Education Policy, Strategic human resource management practices, Higher education, competency framework.

I. INTRODUCTION

The government of India came out with a national policy on education in the year 2020 with very high aspirations for the next 10 to 20 years. There are many provisions of the education policy 1986 which have been implemented effectively and efficiently to achieve quantitative expansion of higher and technical education to provide equal access to aspiring students who want to pursue higher education and research and to satisfy the needs of the industry and society. Similarly, the Government of India designed and implemented many interventions through University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to bring qualitative improvement in higher and technical education. The universities and colleges are expected to prepare and implement an institutional development plan (IDP) incorporating the provisions of the NEP 2020. There is a strong need to design and implement SHRMPs effectively and efficiently as the quality of higher education heavily depends on the collective performance of human resources (governing body, head of the institution and departments, in-charges of various teams, faculty members, technical and ministerial staff). The preparation of both the plans (IDP and SHRMPs) is an iterative process and they supplement and

complement each other to achieve the stipulated goals. The SHRMPs will ensure the effective implementation of the IDP through creating a conducive academic, innovative, research, and development-oriented environment in the institute. This environment will foster the accomplishment of the goals envisaged in the IDP.

To achieve quality universities and colleges vision for higher education systems the universities and colleges are expected to prepare an IDP). There is a need to prepare SHRMP along with IDP to supplement and complement the IDP development, its effective implementation and evaluation and in the next cycle improving the IDP itself. The integration of IDP and SHRMPs is diagrammatically shown in Fig. 1.

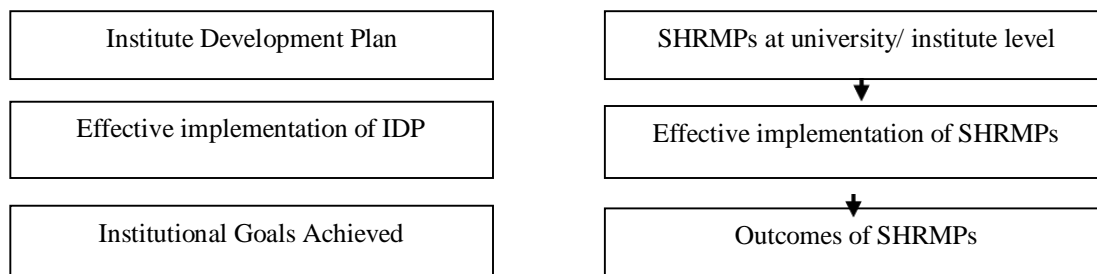


Fig.1: Integration of IDP and SHRMPs

II. STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The quality of higher education depends on the quality of faculty members and their intensive involvement in education, research, and development. The faculty members should be highly motivated to achieve the challenging goals of the institute. To impart quality education to students the student-teacher ratio plays a significant role. The motivation of faculty members needs to be sustained for a longer period so they should be promoted at right time and their achievements should be openly recognized. The recruitment, selection, placement, and induction of faculty members play a role to contribute to quality education. The NEP 2020 has made provision for the faculty members selection, induction, and promotion.

The NPE 2020 envision re-engineering of higher education therefore various SHRMPs need to be used to meet out the long-term human resource requirements. These strategies are new recruitment and selection, outsourcing the human resource work, restructuring the organizational structure, collaboration, networking, performance appraisal and development in a new context, training, and development.

A brief description of SHRMPs is given in subsequent sections in the context of the requirement of national education policy 2020. There is a need to design these SHRMPs systematically and scientifically at the national and institutional levels. National level design will ensure quality, uniformity, credibility, transparency, and portability across the institutions. Then the institutions may be provided flexibility to adopt/adapt these well-designed SHRMPs with flexibility considering local requirements. National level design will save time, efforts, and money required to design the SHRMPs at the same time remove duplication of efforts, conflicting situations, and dilution in quality and implementation.

III. SELECTION PROCESS FOR HEAD OF INSTITUTION, DEPARTMENTS & FACULTY MEMBERS

In order to achieve the vision, missions, and goals stated in the NEP 2020 re-engineering of human resource management practices is required at every level in the education system. The envisioned goals can only be achieved effectively and efficiently designing, implementing, and evaluating SHRMPs in the



county considering the minimum level of quality and competence required for the position. The multidisciplinary universities may be considered building blocks for quality education and excellence for higher education. There is a need for developing a competency framework for the professional Governance structure and multidisciplinary universities to achieve the vision, missions, and goals at the university level.

The heads of the institutions and departments and persons working on key positions need to be selected through a rigorous process considering the competency profile developed for the position in the context of Education Policy 2020 so that the right kind of leaders and administrators are selected. At present, there is no standard process followed at the national level for selecting the people at different positions in the university. The existing system of selection has provision for qualification and experience which may not match with the competencies required for the position. So the authorities may come out with a standard process of selection of human resources may be at the national level and university level ensuring a minimum level of competency profile set for different positions. Qualifying in national level assessment for different positions should be a prerequisite for selecting a person for the position irrespective of the public or private university. This responsibility may be entrusted to the national testing agency (NTA). At the university level, these pre-qualified persons may apply and the university may have its system of selection within the framework set at the national level.

The selection of the right person for the right post is key to the successful implementation of the institutional development plan and implementation of policy provisions. It is not the number of faculty members but it is the right faculty member which matters. This principle applies to all other positions in the university.

IV. ORIENTATION AND INDUCTION OF MANPOWER

The purpose of higher education is directly related to national development and its prosperity. The human resources need to be oriented and effectively inducted to the positions for which they are selected to implement the provisions of the NEP 2020 and achieve the envisioned goals of the policy. At present, there is no standard process benchmarking available for orientation and induction of human resources at different positions in universities and colleges. In the past 30 years fragmented efforts are made by UGC, staff colleges for higher education, AICTE, NITTTRs, and other premier institutions in technical education. In the context of NEP 2020, these efforts need to be revisited. There is a need to design blended orientation and induction programs for all positions for universities and colleges to effectively orient and induct the manpower. The programs may be implemented through study webs of active learning for young aspiring minds (SWAYAM) and professionally managed training institutes. The national-level training academy may be constituted to design and implement orientation and induction programs.

The orientation and induction programs will ensure that selected or deployed persons are well educated about the whole spectrum of their roles and responsibilities for the position. They willingly come forward to accept the challenges of their role and strive to mitigate them. They expand their capability and capacity to perform on a wide spectrum to achieve their self and professional goals. The orientation and induction programs encourage the persons to exploit their full potential and creativity for performing the role. The principle of roles and responsibility clarity will lead to better performance applies here.

V. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The affiliated system with little autonomy to manage institutional activities is very difficult. The delay in the selection of permanent faculty members and even institutional heads deteriorate the situation. The late promotion and absence of incentives directly affect the quality of the teaching-learning process. The contractual appointments and Adhoc decisions bring uncertainty in the functioning of the institute. NEP



2020 recognized the problems and suggested re-engineering the higher education system. Section 9.3 of NEP 2020 states about complete overhaul and re-engineering of the higher education system. The section states moving towards multidisciplinary undergraduate education, faculty, and institutional autonomy, reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through meritorious appointments, and career progression based on teaching, research, and service.

To develop the competencies derived to implement the provisions on NEP 2020, it becomes imperative to develop essential and desirable competencies in all position holders right from governing board members to newly joined faculty members and university staff. There is a need to design and implement training, development, and mentoring programs at the national and university level to ensure quality education on one hand and to continuously improve in performance and reach global benchmarks on other hand. Instead of fragmented efforts standard training, development, and mentoring packages may be designed and implanted at the national level for different positions in the university incorporating the provision of the NEP 2020, use of information technology, education technology, education management, and the world of work expectations.

The proposed national training academy for higher and technical education may take up this responsibility for designing and implementing training programs, developing learning resources (print and non-print), undertaking research studies to improve quality of education at the national level, offering consultancy and extension services to universities and colleges. The training programs may range from 3 days to 30 days on all competencies which have

been identified for different levels of persons. Training may cover all areas which are stated in the national education policy 2020 viz domain-specific, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, assessment of learning, mentoring of students, guidance, counseling, coaching, instructional material development, use of information communication technology, conducting research studies in domain-specific areas and education system improvement studies, environment, sustainability, professional ethics, moral, safety, conservation of natural resources, entrepreneurship, communication, leadership, resource management, academic audit, academic writing, aesthetic, physical, emotional, and the like. It may create a network with proposed universities and colleges to consolidate national resources and remove duplication of efforts being made at different levels. The national training academy may conduct educational programs ranging from certificate to post-doctoral programs.

The global standards in quantity and quality of education can only be achieved by creating multidisciplinary universities and autonomous HEIs. The curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities and researches should be on par with international standards. NEP has addressed this issue through a quality higher education vision.

Training and development of human resources of the university is key to the success of national policy on education 2020. It will enable human resources to internalize, inspire, and perform their role effectively, efficiently, productively, and honestly. It will enable them to harness their full potential for achieving the goals of the university. It will help them to derive satisfaction from achievements and the process of performance.

The development of university human resources on the job under a mentor is another way to develop competency, proficiency, and confidence in the university human resource. A handbook for mentoring, coaching, and guidance may be developed by the national training academy to develop mentoring, coaching, and guiding skills in the experienced persons so that they can use their full potential for this purpose.

At the university level an environment of self-development, learning to learn, thinking to think, challenging existing systems and processes need to be developed which will be useful for implementing outcome-based education and transferring the skills in the students as well. The training and development



efforts need to be linked to institutional development to achieve the goals of the plan.

In the 21st century education, training and development will be ensured through blended mode and online mode. Teachers need to be prepared for developing and offering online educational programs to ensure life long learning of the teachers as well as students. SWAYAM is an online platform created by the government of India which can be used for this purpose.

A national training academy would be able to develop training, learning resources, research guide, awareness programs, orientation programs, mentoring programs, and like which may be implemented using SWAYAM and university resources. The national training academy may conduct education system related research studies like need study, tracer study, impact study, action research and like to take research-based decisions at the national level. Experience sharing on this major change being implemented at the country level may be organized by the national academy in the form of conferences, seminars, symposiums, and workshops.

VI. DEPLOYMENT AND REDEPLOYMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE

The national policy on education states about re-engineering of the higher education system of the country. There is the implementation of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular strategies, systems, and processes that are evolving, dynamic, and vibrant. This dynamism will require deployment and redeployment of all types of resources

i.e. man, material, machine, methods, minute, maintenance, and information. Deployment and redeployment of human resources are key to effectively utilizing their potential and at the same time filling the workforce gap in the university. This approach will create frequent opportunities for those who want to learn and perform on a wide spectrum of activities and gain experience to move upward in the career. This approach will be useful in identifying and harnessing the potential of individuals and developing future leaders for higher responsibilities.

VII. SUCCESSION PLANNING

The quality systems heavily demand continuity at all levels of functioning of the university. People will quit or retire from the system for various reasons at all levels. This calls for designing and implementing the succession plan. Succession planning may also be linked with career advancement based on the achievements of individuals. This is a proactive approach that calls for orientation, redeployment, promotion and working in a team. At the university level, a mechanism need to be developed for succession planning.

VIII. CAREER PROGRESSION

Persons performing well need recognition and advancement in their careers. At the university level, the career advancement scheme needs to be designed and implemented to promote performance excellence and create a competitive spirit among people working at the same level. Advancement in a career will break the monotony in the job and create challenges to assume higher responsibilities throughout the career. At the national level career, advancement rules may be framed and communicated to universities to bring uniformity, portability, and transparency. Career progression opportunities will go on harnessing the experience and expertise developed in the university at the same time create opportunities for lifelong learning, self-learning, and learning to learn abilities that will be transferred to students and other persons in the queue.

IX. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

A new performance appraisal and development system will be required to motivate the people to implement the provisions of the national policy on education 2020. The performance appraisal system may be standardized at the national level with a minimum level of benchmarking for all positions with the



flexibility to add value to it. It will ensure portability, uniformity, and transparency in the system. Considering the challenges for various positions and especially for faculty positions it is necessary to identify the potential of individuals and they may be grouped under different heads like curriculum development, teaching-learning, learning resources development, assessment, mentoring, training and placement, entrepreneurship development, research, consultancy, extension and the like and accordingly, their potential may be harnessed for self and professional benefits. Performance appraisal may be based on many factors such as potential, competence, aptitude, aspiration, etc. The appraisal format is designed in such a way that it acts as planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment tool. The format should be data, fact, figure, and performance-based in most of the cases and not on input, process and behavior base. The format encompasses the provisions of policy such as innovation, research, professional development, and other services to the institution. The performance appraisal results should be used for training, development, mentoring, guidance, coaching, and counseling purpose for individuals and teams. These should be used for giving rewards, recognition, promotion, higher responsibilities. The performance appraisal results of individuals need to be analyzed at the institute level in order to improve the appraisal system itself and take policy decisions to remove performance barriers. As stated in the policy, the appraisal should be 360 degrees so it can be taken online, automatically analyzed at different levels to generate the compiled report for further use. The training, development, deployment and redeployment, career progression, succession planning, and promotion should be linked with the performance appraisal.

The regulatory bodies are expected to evolve performance parameters and benchmark for faculty members. The achievement of the faculty members on parameters against benchmarks should be used for giving fast promotion to the faculty members. There should be a provision for incentives and open recognition for innovations, unique achievements and merit performance. The HEIs should create a favorable environment to unleash the energy of faculty members for accepting innovative projects, taking the risk, conducting research projects, and bringing improvements in the system. Similar findings are quoted by DeVanna, 1984; Latham, 1984; McKeachie 1983.

X. MENTORING, GUIDANCE, COACHING AND COUNSELLING

Mentoring, guidance, coaching, and counselling are the four strong processes that need to be managed systematically, psychologically and socially in order to harness the full potential of the individuals and teams in the university. The effective system of mentoring, guidance, coaching, and counseling will prevent many behavioral problems in the university, which will result in motivating and innovating the work environment. A guideline document may be prepared for this purpose at the national level addressing the needs of the faculty members and students. In each university, a cell may be constituted for this purpose which will prepare a yearly action plan and implement it at the university level. This plan will include a whole range of activities at the institute, department, program, and class level. It will also take care of organizing awareness and education programs on various themes such as environment, safety, hygiene, use of information communication technology, professional ethics, use of green technology, and the like. This plan may be an integral part of the institutional development plan.

XI. RETENTION OF FACULTY MEMBERS AND LEADERS

There is a need for retaining the people who have created conducive academic and research culture in the university, who have raised the standards of the profession, and who is the role model for others. They are an asset to the university. They are the people who have created core academic culture in the institute. They have strengthened the academics and research in the institute. Their satisfaction on compensation, promotion, assignments, incentives, recognition is very important. The retention may be improved creating conducive environment of teaching-learning, granting autonomy related to role performance, offering mentoring to young faculty members, providing good infrastructure and internet facility. The retention may be ensured by reducing role stress, overcoming conflicting environment, and removing



communication barriers. Their retention will sustain the development and corporate image of the institute. The current compensation for meritorious faculty members is not adequate to retain high performing leaders and faculty members. It needs to be reviewed at the national level and respectful compensation at par with excellent compensation in the university system in the world needs to be developed and implemented. There is research evidence for such compensation and retention. Hansel (1991), Boice (2000), Cooper & Stevens (2002; Garcia, (2000), Bataille& Brown, (2006), Berry, Hammons, & Denny, (2001), Murray & Cunningham, (2004), Berry et al., (2001), Hagedorn, (2000), Fuming & Jiliang, (2007), Solem& Foote, (2004).

XII. CONDUCTIVE CULTURE FOR INNOVATION

The NEP contemplates reengineer, research, innovate on one hand, and achieve quality and excellence on other hand. It also stresses multidisciplinary university and educational programs. The culture for excellence can be created by constituting multidisciplinary teams for achieving various interdisciplinary goals. These teams will create an environment of cooperativeness, collaboration, effective communication, amicably resolving conflict and thereby producing a synergistic effect on performance. The internal management of the university may be through teams' structure. Similarly, students' formal and informal teams may be encouraged for innovative activities and developing non-traditional abilities. It is said that any innovation can thrive on the conducive culture of the university. Working in teams' approach will create opportunities for shared leadership and provide a vent for sharing the problems and grievances. This approach will also create opportunities for learning from peers, performing collectively, and feedback from others which is a principle of adult learning.

University culture encompasses shared vision, values, beliefs, norms, and ethics which are strong driving forces to take the university towards excellence. All SHRMPs contribute significantly to building the culture. It helps to socialize the persons who are joining the university and matter of pride for those who are retiring or passing out the university. It helps in the image building of the university. Therefore, it is the individual duty and collective responsibility of everyone to create a conducive culture for academics and research in the university. As it is said that organizational culture is difficult to change therefore it needs to be created with care and caution.

XIII. GRIEVANCE MANAGEMENT

The effective grievance management system contributes to the satisfaction of the employees. A standard grievance management system may be designed at the national level for universities and colleges, which may be effectively implemented by them with some degree of freedom. The grievance management system needs to be objective, transparent, and credible. An independent appeal system needs to be created so that biases may be overcome in the decision-making process and in decisions.

XIV. CONCLUSION

There is a strong need to design and implement SHRMPs at the national, state, university, and college level. These practices are designed and implemented integrally to achieve the envisioned goals in the NEP 2020. These practices become more significant when many provisions of the policy need concretization at different levels. These strategies will expand the capacity and capability of existing human resources in higher education and prepare the workforce to achieve excellence in education. The SHRMPs need to be designed in totality integrating each practice in a dovetail manner with IDP of the university. In this paper, some propositions are made in the context of NEP 2020, multidisciplinary university, and SHRMPs. These assumptions are as follows:

Systematically and scientifically designed and implemented SHRMPs will result in an assessment of current human resource capability in university, estimating the future requirements of human resources, selection of a right person for the right position, effective orientation and induction of the faculty in the



system, competent and willing leaders and faculty members for achieving institutional goals, effective utilization of human resources, no gap/vacuum for a particular position, recognition for achievements, right deployment of individuals and teams, harnessing the full potential of individuals and teams, highly self-motivated and guided faculty members, effective grievance management, retention of faculty, satisfied faculty members and staff. These outcomes of SHRMPs will result in innovative practices, effective change management, conducive culture, image building, personal pride, empowerment, sense of accountability. Over a period, say five to ten years these results will be transformed into sustained quality education, academic excellence, satisfied faculty members, work-ready graduates, happy employers, responsive university for an economic, social, and environmental cause.

XV. RECOMMENDATIONS

National level

1. It is proposed to set up a selection agency at a national level or assign this task to a national testing agency (NTA) for providing the right persons for the right positions. This selection may be considered as a pre-requisite for a further selection of the person for a particular position in a particular university.
2. It is proposed to set a national training academy for higher and technical education at the national level with a strong and active network with proposed national level councils and training cells of the university. It may function under the proposed National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). Existing education and training providing institutions like National Institute of Technical Teachers Training and Research and staff training colleges, AICTE training and learning (ATAL) Academy, training under different projects like Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), technical education quality improvement program (TEQIP), maybe constituent of National training academy. This academy will establish strong linkages and undertake collaborative activities to consolidate the work of all institutions.
3. It is proposed to develop a competency framework for implementing strategic human resource management practices at the national, university, and college levels. It is proposed that a position wise competency profile may be developed to ensure the selection of the right person for the right position.
4. It is proposed to prepare a handbook for universities and colleges to implement strategic human resource management practices.
5. It is proposed to develop a performance appraisal and development system and potential appraisal system at the national level with a minimum level of quantitative and qualitative benchmarks which may be followed by universities.
6. It is proposed to design guidelines for various areas of functioning of the university i.e. governance and management of the university, mentoring, coaching, guidance, and counseling for faculty and students, entrepreneurship development, collaborating with the foreign universities and industries, use of information communication technology, guiding students major projects, grievance management, research project management, consultancy quality assurance, and the like.
7. It is proposed to set minimum quantitative and qualitative benchmarks for academics, research, consultancy, and extension at the national level for the universities and colleges.

University level

1. It is proposed to design governance and management structure (preferably teams' structure) at the university level within the framework provided by a statutory body. Initially, the structure may be the most essential functions which may evolve along with the implementation of IDP. The constitution of teams should be multidisciplinary and contribute towards becoming a multidisciplinary university



with quality education.

2. It is proposed to prepare an institute development plan (strategic, perspective, and annual) incorporating the provisions of the NEP 2020. The strategic human resource development practices need to be designed in an integrated manner to supplement and complement the effective implementation of IDP.
3. It is proposed to create a strategic human resource management system at the university level, which will design and implement SHRMPs to supplement and complement IDP of the university. This SHRMPs cell will take a proactive approach to implement all SHRMPs in letter and spirit. These practices are selection, orientation and induction, training and development, deployment and re-deployment, succession planning, career progression, performance appraisal and development, mentoring, guidance, coaching and counseling, retention, conducive culture, grievance management, empowerment, and the like. These practices need to be strategically congruent and consistent with each other.
4. It is proposed to carve out rules under the national framework for recruitment, service condition, incentives, promotion, and publish them on the university website.
5. It is proposed that all SHRMPs are designed and implemented which are based on principles of SHRM like performance challenges, self-inspiration, strategic vision, constructive feedback for improvement, individual and team autonomy with accountability, experimentation, risk-taking, decentralization of power, empowerment, self-reflection on performance and the like.
6. It is proposed that each faculty member and officer prepare and implement a self-development plan aligned to IDP.
7. It is proposed to create a conducive culture for academics, research, consultancy and extension. Frequent creativity sessions, discussions, meetings, debates, presentations, and conferences should be organized in a planned manner.
8. It is proposed that various types of education system improvement research studies like need analysis, action research, tracer study, impact study, etc. should be undertaken at the university level to bring a spiral effect in improving the performance of the system as a whole.
9. It is proposed to undertake consultancy projects from the real world which will develop the competence and confidence of faculty members.
10. It is proposed to have strong collaboration and networking with national and foreign universities and organizations. Such type of academic, research, and extension related collaboration develop the competence and confidence in faculty members.
11. It is proposed to generously sponsor the faculty members for attending relevant quality conferences and training programs.

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