The structure of governance and management in institutions of higher education

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Abstract: India's NEP 2020, the first education policy of the 21st century, aims to improve higher education quality through multidisciplinary universities and autonomous colleges. It necessitates significant changes in regulatory systems at the national level and governance and management structures at the institutional level. A research study in Maharashtra analyzed existing systems in fifteen technical institutions, proposing new frameworks for governance and management.

Keywords: Governance, Management, Teams' structure, Autonomy

I. RATIONALE

NEP 2020 has envisioned quality education and excellence. Autonomy is a tool to govern and manage higher education institutions (HEIs) and make them accountable to the stakeholders. The governance and management system of HEIs needs to be designed and implemented in such a manner so that it achieves the vision and goals stipulated in NEP 2020 and its vision and goals. The governance and management should ultimately lead to full freedom and empowerment of governing and managing teams and individuals along with accountability and responsibility. The students should be encouraged to become autonomous learners so that they develop learning to learn skills, thinking to think skills, and lifelong learning skills. The students of the 21st century should be equipped with a wide range of skills as stipulated in NEP 2020. They should become mature learners so that they can learn and perform in their life whenever the need arises. In an autonomous institution,the decision-making process should percolate down to the teams and person responsible to perform the role, and the benefits of services of the institute to reach the students and other relevant stakeholders.

II. REGULATORY STRUCTURE AT NATIONAL LEVEL

NEP 2020 section 18 states "about transforming the regulatory system of Higher Education at the country level. It states to constitute the Higher Education Commission of India under which four empowered bodies called the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), National Accreditation Council (NAC), Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), and General Education Council (GEC) will function". These empowered bodies will remove the conflict of interest among regulatory bodies, empower HEIs, and devolve responsibility and accountability to HEIs. The regulatory system will be transparent and depersonalized to ensure efficiency and transparency. The regulatory system will make the regulatory process easier, ensure effectiveness, and provide financial backing for long term stability. NEP 2020 section 19 states about effective governance and leadership for higher education institutions.

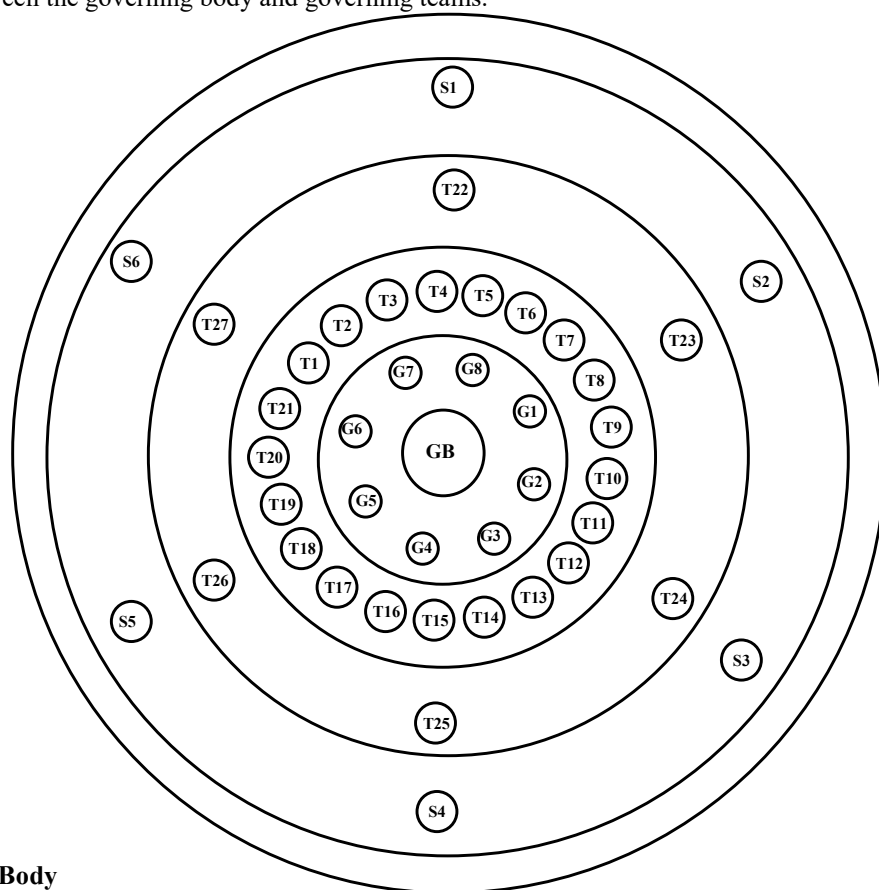## III. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AT HEIS

The NEP 2020 has envisaged three major functions of the HEIs. The first function is to offer multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary programs to satisfy the changing needs of the admission seekers, employers, society, and other stakeholders. The second function is to conduct research studies in the domain-specific specialization area, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary areas. The third function is to offer a variety of services to students, industry, society, and other stakeholders.

In the context of NEP 2020 substantive autonomy may address decisions related to offering new educational programs, closing obsolete educational programs, establishing new centers and departments, setting benchmarks for performance, compensations, incentives, promotion, redeployment, retrenchment, diversification, experimentation, and the like. The HEIs will function under certain well-defined policies, rules, regulations, norms, and guidelines.

The governance structure of HEIs need to design to timely provide policy decisions, which set direction and govern the functioning of HEIs.

The governance structure of the institute should be decisive, flexible, innovative, responsive, facilitating, guiding, and accommodative to address the ever-changing needs of the students, industry, society, and stakeholders. It should be evolving to move forward in the direction of empowerment, expansion, quality, and excellence. It should work under a broader regulatory framework provided in NEP 2020.

The author has studied the governance and management structure of 15 autonomous institutions of Maharashtra State and developed a team's structure for autonomous institutions for the 21st century. The team's structure shown in Fig. 1 is built on various teams, which acts as building blocks for synchronized functioning to accomplish the goals. The governing body is considered as the nucleus of all the teams. The governing body is facilitated by 8 governing teams. Chairman/Members to these teams are also a member of the governing body, which establish proper links between the governing body and governing teams.

GB- Governing Body
Governing Teams:

G1	Board of studies	**G5**	Appeal & Grievance Team
G2	Programme wise Board of Studies	**G6**	Purchase Team
G3	Planning Team	**G7**	Finance Team
G4	Evaluation Team		

Institution Management Teams - Priority Area Teams

T1	Curriculum Development	**T2**	Admission of student	**T3**	Learning Resource Development
T4	Library	**T5**	Staff training and development	**T6**	Hostel Management
T7	Gymkhana	**T8**	Cooperative Store	**T9**	Examination
T10	Guidance, counselling, coaching & mentoring	**T11**	Administration & Discipline	**T12**	Industry Institute Interaction
T13	Continuing Education	**T14**	Research & Innovation	**T15**	Consultancy
T16	Community Development and social services	**T17**	Building construction & maintenance	**T18**	Purchase
T19	Finance	**T20**	Internal quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation	**T21**	Documentation & Publication

Specific Requirement Teams

T22	Condemnation of materials	**T23**	Campus development	**T24**	Performance appraisal and development
T25	Evaluation of programmes & projects	**T26**	Service conditions	**T27**	Recruitments

Voluntary Participation Schemes

S1	Quality circles/students clubs/students council	**S4**	Joint objective setting
S2	Suggestion box	**S5**	Organising creativity sessions
S3	Co-operation & support	**S6**	Exchange of ideas

Fig. 1: Teams Structure for HEIs

IV. INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

In the context of NEP 2020 procedural autonomy may address decisions related to budgeting, generating and utilizing revenue, recruitment and selection, purchase, construction, IT infrastructure, setting labs and workshops, creating centers/cells, signing a memorandum of understanding, and the like.

All governing teams are supported by one or more than one institutional management team with common membership. In the first layer of institutional management, 27 teams are proposed to be constituted which are considered to be in the priority area of institutional functioning. The individual institution depending on specific requirements may constitute some more institutional management teams. These teams become building blocks for each other for an excellent performance. Apart from the governing body, governing teams, and institutional management teams, it is also proposed to promote voluntary participation of institutional members including students and stakeholders through various schemes. The institutional management teams constituted in various areas of institutional functioning will communicate with each other depending on the requirements of the task. They will also communicate with the governing body and governing teams. All the teams are networked for different purposes to coordinate, cooperate, communicate, understand, share the resources and experiences, give, and take feedback. The networking will remove roadblocks to quality, innovations, and excellence. Networking among teams will also spread and accelerate the progress of innovation. There is no hierarchy in the functioning of various teams. They supplement and complement each other. Institutional management teams generally prepare the groundwork for the governing teams and governing body for policy formulation and strategic planning which is discussed, debated, and approved by the governing teams and governing body. Once the policy and strategic plans are through the institution management teams implement them. Institution management teams also implement many innovations in the institution. They continuously improve the quality of performance in their respective area of functioning. Team structure promotes the involvement of stakeholders and all institutional members to accomplish the vision and mission of the institute.

There are ample evidences for justification of teams' structure in HEIs. Teams' structure in HEIs is considered to be the key to governance and management of HEIs. The effectiveness of teams will result in high-quality education, research, and services. It will create a network of teams to bring synergetic effects within a team and among teams. It will lead to collaborative and community working. Teams working will result in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the functioning of the institutions. Teams are formed from inter-discipline and multidiscipline areas so it takes care of multi-dimension development of people and their skills development. Teams will result in preventing the problems and resolving conflict among institutional members. Over the years teams' structure of the HEIs will result in a learning organization. (Charles, 1996, Katzenbach, 1993, French, 1996, Sallis, 1993, Joseph & Susan Berk, 1995, AnthoryRmontebellow, 1996, David &Tade, 1982, David &Tade, 1982).

A greater degree of autonomy and empowerment is required to take the right decision at right time at all levels of the institute through teams' structure.Teams' structure satisfies the requirements of bottom-up and top-down planning and effective implementation of plans. It fosters a blueprint as well as a process approach to planning and implementation. It facilitates proactive planning leading to effective change and management. Teams' structure inherits the benefits of working in a team and community approach.

V. FORMATION OF INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Institutional teams are constituted by the head of the institute, consulting autonomy in-charge, heads of departments, and chairman governing body. While constituting these teams, criteria like; experience, interest in a specific area, training in a specific area, the willingness of members, ability of members, and institutional priority are kept in mind. The term of these teams is generally kept three years. These teams function under the overall leadership of the principal and implement the decisions of the governing body. Apart from implementing decisions of the governing body, they bring quantitative and qualitative improvements in their respective areas of functioning. The decisions of the governing body are communicated to these teams using various modes of communication like; circulating the minutes of the meeting, brief circulars, verbally, telephonically, and through meetings. The Head of the institute provides all the necessary resources and support to implement the decisions or to bring innovations. Everybody in the organization encourages these teams and their efforts are openly recognized. Their functions are flexible but broadly defined.

VI. MODE OF FUNCTIONING

Institutional management teams constituted in key areas of institutional functioning undergo intensive training in teamwork and their respective area of working. They receive the decisions of the governing body, which are detailed out in an action plan to be implemented by each team in which roles and responsibilities of each team member is decided and commitment is obtained. Each team implements the action plan for which the head of the institute provides resources and support. The significant accomplishments of these teams are presented openly and recognized. Continuous monitoring, problem-solving, and feedback are considered key to the success of teamwork. All Institutional management teams are responsible to the governing body through the head of the institute.

VII. BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF TEAMS

It is observed that different teams face different kinds of barriers. Careful planning and preventive actions can overcome these barriers.

Barriers faced by Governing Body: There are some barriers like; low commitment of members, lack of ability of members to contribute in a specific area, lack of resources, the resistance of high profile persons to attend meetings, hidden agenda, conflicts in interests, lack of quorum and inadequate preparation for the meetings are generally faced by the governing body.

Barriers faced by governing teams: There are some barriers like; inadequate time, inadequate resources, less motivation, inadequate budget, absence of training, low support, no recognition and reward, and inappropriate guidance faced by governing teams.

Barriers faced by institutional management teams: There are some barriers like; inadequate time, low budget, motivation, reward/recognition, irregular meetings, the interest of members, administrative and financial autonomy, uncertain nature of work, training, and complex government rules are faced by internal management teams.

VIII. STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TEAMS

The effective functioning of various teams is necessary forthe team structure of management. It is ensured through well-designed strategies and theirimplementation. Strategies for the effective functioning of the teams' structure are

as follows; imparting need-based training, openly recognizing the accomplishments of the teams, providing autonomy to evolve team norms, solving the problems timely, making roles and responsibilities clear, providing necessary resources and support timely, encouraging team members to accept the challenges, providing relevant information related to the task, promoting healthy competition, circulating minutes of the meeting, ensuring effective communication and taking timely actions.

IX. OUTCOMES OF TEAMS' STRUCTURE

Heads of autonomous institutions reported following outcomes of teams' structure; quick and enhanced quality decisions at all levels in the institute, increased responsibility emerged because of challenges in work, shared responsibility and accountability of team members, enhanced commitment of team members for achieving challenging goals, enhanced self-confidence, increased transparency in working because of social pressure, effective coordination and cooperation among team members to produce synergetic effect, improved quality of academics, time saving in performing complex task, increased flexibility in teaching learning, on the job training of team members, improved performance in academics and research, healthy academic environment, creative problem solving, enhanced trust among core team members, distributed work according to talent of the member, risk factor lowered down, readiness to face challenges, sustained interest in academic work, work does not suffer in case of absence of a member, quick implementation of academic and administrative decisions, less conflict among teachers, effective utilization of library and laboratories, effective communication among teachers and students, good interpersonal relationship between faculty and staff members, members discipline and satisfaction.

X. IMPACT OF AUTONOMY ON PERFORMANCE OF THE INSTITUTE

Independent institute: The institute becomes empowered to take immediate decisions at all levels to deal with the situation. This type of functioning of institute prevent problems and crisis and encourage proactive approaches to dealing with the situations. The innovation and change can be designed and implemented in totality as and when there is an opportunity for improvement.

Unique vision and institution development plan: The institute may grow and excel in its way to create its brand image. It can take the advantage of the market niche and offer educational programs, research, services, consultancy, and extension.

Empowered for quality assurance: The institute may design quality systems and processes within the national and international framework and implement them effectively and efficiently. Based on the experiences of implementation, feedback, and evaluation it can continuously improve the design and implementation of the systems. The institute may empower the faculty and staff members and students for curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

Responsive to stakeholders: The institute may take fast and spontaneous decisions and address the changing and challenging needs and requirements of students and stakeholders. The institute analyses the potential needs of the students, employers, and stakeholders and prepares itself to address the needs.

Financially sound: The institute becomes financially sound-generating revenue through legitimate sources like tuition fees, research grants, renting the infrastructure, testing material, offering continuing education programs, offering internship, industrial projects, conducting conferences, organizing joint events, and the like.

Capacity to compete: The institute becomes competitive in performing and achieving its goals. It may compete with sister institutions at the same time have the capability to compete for taking national and international projects related to education, education and training resources development, research, and problem-solving.

Self-evaluation for continuous improvement:The institute becomes self-evaluative for taking corrective and preventing actions to improve the inputs, processes, systems, and outcomes. The goals for the next cycle are raised to take the advantage of learning curve effect, experiences, and feedback.

Contribution for solving complex problems of industry and society: The institute takes the advantage of autonomy and become proactive to contribute for industry and society through research, projects, problem-solving, and organizing collaborative events. This leads to solving complex problems in a collaborative manner. Institute become confident for contributing to national missions and state government missions.

XI. AUTONOMY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Autonomy and accountability go together in a balanced way to maximize the benefits of autonomy. As envisaged in NEP 2020 the light but the tight principle of regulation is considered to be a good principle. It is proposed that self-accountability needs to be enforced at the governance, leadership, and faculty member level rather than making them accountable to someone else. The accountability should be seen in terms of achievements against the approved goals at all levels in HEIs and not incomparable terms with other institutes or within the institute. The core business of HEIs is academics, research, and services so more degree of accountability should be determined concerning goals related to these areas than supporting areas.

XII. CONCLUSION

The greater degree of autonomy and accountability can be beneficial to the institute and its stakeholders under the condition of having teams' structure at governance and management level, decentralization and delegation at the level where the role is performed. The teams' structure will result in creativity, innovation, change, development, quality, and excellence at the institute level. Similarly,students' quality circles, clubs, and community will result in interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and multidisciplinary abilities. Teams will make them mature for learning, developing learning to learn, and lifelong learning skills. It will enable the institute to come out with purposeful results in teaching-learning, research, and services as envisaged in NEP 2020. At the institution level, intensive teambuilding and leadership development exercises need to be taken to shift from a highly traditional culture of working towards an entrepreneurial way of functioning. The leadership role at the governance and management level plays a key role in bringing transformation. The heads of the institutions need to demonstrate visionary, transformational, and transactional leadership abilities effectively and efficiently.

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