

FROM CLIMATE TO IMPACT

HRM Strategies for Sustainable
Productivity

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HRM Strategies for Sustainable Productivity

Edited by

Dr. Devanshi Pandya



Indu Book Services Pvt. Ltd.

(Publishers & Distributors)

New Delhi

From Climate to Impact: HRM Strategies for Sustainable Productivity

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First Published: 2026

ISBN: 978-93-6729-354-6

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HEAD OFFICE:

Indu Book Services Pvt. Ltd.

(ISO 9001:2015 Certified- IAF Certified)

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Typeset by

GURPAL COMPUTERS (*Amandeep Singh*), Nawanshahr-144514 (PB.)

**“Policies design systems, but
organisational climate
determines outcomes.”**

Acknowledgement

The editor sincerely acknowledges the contributions of all chapter authors whose scholarly work and academic dedication form the core of this volume. Their cooperation and thoughtful engagement greatly enriched the quality of the book. Grateful acknowledgement is extended to The Charutar Vidya Mandal (CVM) University for its continuous support and for fostering an academic environment that encourages research and intellectual collaboration. The editor also appreciates the encouragement and support received from colleagues and peers during the development of this work.

Preface

Higher education institutions today stand at a critical crossroads. Universities and colleges are expected to simultaneously uphold academic excellence, expand access, enhance research output, ensure accountability, and contribute meaningfully to societal development. Amidst these growing expectations, the role of human resource management has moved far beyond administrative compliance to become a strategic driver of institutional effectiveness. Yet, despite well-designed policies, reforms, and structural frameworks, many institutions continue to struggle with issues of faculty disengagement, declining morale, burnout, and uneven productivity. This paradox raises a fundamental question: what truly enables human resource strategies to translate into sustainable outcomes?

This book, *From Climate to Impact: HRM Strategies for Sustainable Productivity*, is anchored in the central premise that organisational climate is the critical link between intention and impact in higher education institutions. Organisational climate - shaped by leadership practices, governance mechanisms, interpersonal relationships, and HR systems - defines how policies are experienced, how work is performed, and how individuals connect with their institution. It is within this climate that faculty motivation is nurtured or diminished, collaboration is encouraged or constrained, and productivity becomes either sustainable or fragile.

The chapters in this volume collectively examine how organisational climate influences key dimensions of academic life, including faculty engagement, well-being, work - life balance, ethical governance, institutional change, and scholarly practice. Drawing from diverse perspectives such as human resource management, organisational behaviour, ethics, and discipline-specific contexts, the contributors highlight that sustainable productivity cannot be achieved through control, metrics, or compliance alone. Instead, it emerges from climates characterised by trust, fairness, autonomy, psychological safety, and meaningful participation.

Particular attention is given to the realities of Indian higher education, where institutions operate within complex regulatory frameworks, resource constraints, and evolving policy landscapes. The book recognises that while structural reforms and national policies provide direction, their success ultimately depends on how they are interpreted and enacted within institutional climates. By foregrounding faculty experiences and perceptions, this volume emphasises the human dimension of institutional performance.

This book is intended for academic leaders, HR professionals, policy makers, researchers, and scholars who seek to understand and strengthen the human foundations of higher education institutions. It invites readers to move beyond surface-level interventions and engage with the deeper environmental factors that shape behaviour and outcomes. By placing organisational climate at the centre of HRM discourse, the volume aspires to contribute to the creation of academic workplaces that are not only productive, but also humane, ethical, and resilient.

Ultimately, *From Climate to Impact* underscores a simple yet profound insight: sustainable productivity in higher education is not imposed - it is cultivated through the climate in which people teach, research, and serve.

Editor

Dr. Devanshi Pandya

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Psychosocial Factors, Burnout Prevention, and HRM Interventions: Advancing Faculty Well-Being in Academic Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Well-being, work-life balance, and mental health have emerged as critical issues in contemporary academic institutions due to increasing workload, performance pressure, role overload, and changing organizational structures. The present chapter critically examines the multidimensional nature of well-being in academic institutions, with particular emphasis on work-life balance, mental health concerns, gender-based challenges, and the role of institutional and HR interventions. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and Role Stress Theory, the chapter explains how excessive job demands, when not balanced with adequate resources, lead to stress, burnout, and work-life imbalance among academicians. It highlights the unique nature of academic work characterized by blurred boundaries between personal and professional life, gendered work-family conflict, emotional labor, and job insecurity. Special attention is given to women academicians, who face compounded psycho social stress due to societal expectations and institutional constraints. The chapter further explores the importance of supportive work environments, leadership styles, counseling services, flexible policies, mentor-ship, and gender-sensitive frameworks in promoting holistic well-being. Human Resource interventions are discussed as strategic mechanisms for enhancing faculty well-being and institutional effectiveness. In the Indian context, the chapter links

faculty well-being with UGC regulations and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizing teacher empowerment, autonomy, and professional development. Overall, the chapter underscores that promoting well-being in academic institutions is not merely a welfare measure but a strategic investment for sustainable academic excellence.

Keywords: *Well-being, Work-Life Balance, Mental Health, HR Interventions*

1. INTRODUCTION

Well-being, work-life balance, and mental health have emerged as critical concerns within academic institutions across the globe. Academic environments are traditionally perceived as intellectually enriching and socially prestigious; however, they are also characterized by high work demands, performance pressures, and complex psychosocial challenges. Faculty members and students are expected to excel simultaneously in teaching, research, administration, and personal development, often leading to psychological strain. In recent years, growing attention has been paid to the holistic well-being of academic stakeholders, recognizing that mental health and psycho-social well-being are integral to institutional effectiveness and sustainable academic growth.

Well-being in academic institutions is a multidimensional concept encompassing physical, psychological, emotional, and social aspects of life. Psychological well-being refers to individuals' ability to manage stress, maintain positive relationships, and experience a sense of purpose and satisfaction in their professional roles. In academia, well-being is closely linked to job satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and commitment. Poor well-being among faculty and students can negatively affect teaching quality, research output, and learning outcomes, thereby undermining the overall academic environment.

Work-life balance represents another significant dimension of psycho social well-being in academic institutions. Academic work often extends beyond fixed working hours due to responsibilities such as lesson preparation, research publications, grant writing, student mentoring, and administrative duties. This blurring of boundaries between professional and personal life frequently results in work-family conflict and reduced personal time. Women academicians, in particular, experience additional pressures due to

societal expectations and care giving responsibilities, making work–life balance a gender-sensitive issue in higher education.

Mental health challenges among academicians and students have become increasingly visible in recent decades. High workloads, role overload, performance evaluation systems, job insecurity, and competitive academic cultures contribute to stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression. Students similarly face academic pressure, examination stress, career uncertainty, and social adjustment issues. Despite the prevalence of mental health concerns, stigma and lack of institutional support often prevent individuals from seeking timely help.

1.1 Concept Of Well-Being In Academic Institutions

Well-being in academic institutions refers to the overall quality of life and holistic functioning of individuals within the educational environment, including faculty members, non-teaching staff, and students. Academic institutions are not only centers of knowledge production but also social organizations where individuals spend a significant portion of their lives. Therefore, well-being in such institutions encompasses the ability of individuals to function effectively, manage academic and occupational demands, maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and experience satisfaction and meaning in their academic roles. A healthy academic environment promotes not only intellectual growth but also psychological resilience, social harmony, and emotional stability among its stakeholders.

1.2 Subjective And Objective Well-Being

Well-being can be understood through two major perspectives: subjective well-being and objective well-being. Subjective well-being refers to individuals' personal evaluations of their own lives, including life satisfaction, happiness, and emotional experiences. In academic contexts, subjective well-being is influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, academic achievement, recognition, work–life balance, and perceived support. On the other hand, objective well-being focuses on measurable external conditions such as income, job security, workload, working conditions, access to institutional resources, and availability of support services. While objective well-being provides the structural foundation, subjective well-being

reflects how individuals perceive and experience these conditions. A healthy academic institution requires alignment between both subjective and objective aspects of well-being.

1.3 Well-Being Of Teaching And Non-Teaching Staff

The well-being of teaching and non-teaching staff plays a crucial role in the effective functioning of academic institutions. Teaching staff face multiple demands such as curriculum delivery, research productivity, publication pressure, student mentoring, and administrative responsibilities. These demands often lead to role overload, stress, and burnout if not balanced with adequate institutional support. Non-teaching staff, although less visible, experience stress related to job insecurity, workload, limited career progression, and lack of recognition. Poor well-being among staff can result in absenteeism, low motivation, reduced efficiency, and high turnover. Therefore, ensuring the well-being of both teaching and non-teaching staff is essential for maintaining a supportive, productive, and sustainable academic environment.

1.4 Importance Of Well-Being For Academic Productivity And Institutional Effectiveness

Well-being is closely linked to academic productivity and institutional effectiveness. Faculty members with higher levels of well-being demonstrate better teaching effectiveness, creativity, research output, and commitment to institutional goals. Similarly, students with positive well-being show improved concentration, learning capacity, academic achievement, and participation in academic activities. At the institutional level, well-being contributes to a positive organizational climate, reduced conflict, improved collaboration, and enhanced reputation. Institutions that prioritize well-being are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability, academic excellence, and stakeholder satisfaction. Therefore, promoting well-being is not merely a welfare measure but a strategic investment in institutional development and quality education.

Psycho-social factors play a crucial role in shaping well-being and mental health in academic settings. These factors include workload, role conflict, role ambiguity, interpersonal relationships, organizational climate, leadership style, and social support systems.

Unfavorable psycho-social conditions can lead to occupational stress and burnout, while supportive environments can enhance resilience, engagement, and psychological well-being.

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding well-being and mental health in academic institutions. According to the JD-R Model, job demands such as excessive workload, time pressure, emotional demands, and role conflict can lead to stress and burnout when not adequately balanced by job resources. Job resources, including administrative support, autonomy, flexible work arrangements, social support, and opportunities for professional development, can buffer the negative effects of job demands and promote work engagement and well-being. In academic institutions, an imbalance between high job demands and insufficient resources often contributes to work–life imbalance and mental health problems.

1.5 What Is The Jd-R Model?

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model is a framework in organizational psychology that explains how job characteristics influence employee well-being, motivation, and performance. It divides work conditions into two categories: job demands, which require sustained effort and can lead to strain or burnout (e.g., workload, emotional demands, time pressure), and job resources, which help employees meet those demands, reduce stress, and foster engagement (e.g., supportive leadership, autonomy, training opportunities). Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001)

- **Why It Is Important:** The JD-R Model is widely used to understand and predict employee engagement and burnout. By balancing demands with sufficient resources, organizations can maintain a healthy, motivated, and productive workforce. It also provides a flexible framework that can be applied across industries, job types, and cultures, making it highly practical for HR strategy.
- **How It Affects Hrc:** HR can use the JD-R model to design roles, policies, and interventions that balance demands with resources. It provides a framework for reducing burnout,

improving engagement, and aligning HR strategy with workforce sustainability.

Role Stress Theory further explains psycho-social challenges faced by academicians and students. The theory emphasizes role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity as major sources of stress. Faculty members frequently juggle multiple roles such as teacher, researcher, administrator, mentor, and community contributor, leading to conflicting expectations and excessive role demands. When roles are poorly defined or incompatible, individuals experience psychological strain, reduced job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion. Similarly, students encounter role stress while balancing academic responsibilities, family expectations, and social roles. The impact of compromised well-being and mental health extends beyond individuals to the institution as a whole. Poor mental health among faculty can result in reduced teaching effectiveness, lower research productivity, absenteeism, and high turnover intentions. Among students, mental health issues can lead to poor academic performance, dropout, and disengagement from learning. Therefore, promoting psycho-social well-being is not only a matter of individual health but also an institutional priority. In the post-pandemic context, academic institutions face additional psycho-social challenges due to digitization, online teaching, increased workload, and techno-stress. The rapid shift to virtual modes of education has intensified work demands and blurred work–life boundaries, further emphasizing the need for institutional interventions.

In this context, addressing well-being, work–life balance, and mental health through a psycho-social lens becomes essential. Integrating theoretical perspectives such as the JD-R Model and Role Stress Theory helps in understanding the complex interaction between individual, organizational, and social factors. The present study underscores the importance of developing supportive policies, counseling services, flexible work practices, and a positive institutional climate to foster holistic well-being and sustainable development in academic institutions.

1.6 Understanding Work–Life Balance In Academia

1.6.1 Concept And Definition Of Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance (WLB) refers to an individual's ability to effectively manage and harmonize the demands of paid work with

personal, family, and social responsibilities. It is not merely an equal distribution of time between work and non-work roles but rather a subjective perception of satisfaction and minimal role conflict across life domains. Scholars emphasize that work–life balance is achieved when individuals experience low levels of inter-role conflict and high levels of enrichment between work and personal life. In academic settings, work–life balance is particularly complex due to the overlapping and continuous nature of academic responsibilities, which often extend beyond formal working hours. Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985); Clark, S. C. (2000); Guest, D. E. (2002)

1.6.2 Unique Nature Of Academic Work

Academic work is inherently multifaceted, encompassing teaching, research, administrative duties, and extension or community engagement activities. Teaching responsibilities include classroom instruction, curriculum development, student mentoring, and evaluation, while research demands continuous scholarly output through publications, projects, and conference participation. Additionally, faculty members are expected to perform administrative roles such as committee work, accreditation tasks, and institutional governance. Extension activities further require engagement with society, policy bodies, and community development initiatives. The simultaneous performance of these roles increases workload intensity and creates constant pressure to excel across multiple performance indicators, making work–life balance particularly challenging for academics.

1.6.3 Blurring Boundaries Between Personal And Professional Life In Academia

One of the defining characteristics of academic work is the blurring of boundaries between personal and professional life. Unlike many other professions, academic work is not confined to fixed office hours or physical workplaces. Research writing, lesson planning, student supervision, and manuscript revisions frequently take place during evenings, weekends, and holidays. The increasing use of digital technologies, online learning platforms, and constant email communication has further intensified boundary permeability, leading to role overload and work encroachment into personal life. As a result, academics often normalize overwork, which negatively affects their psychological well-being and family relationships.

1.6.4 Gender Dimensions Of Work–Life Balance In Academia (Especially For Women Faculty)

Work–life balance challenges in academia are strongly gendered, with women faculty experiencing greater work–family conflict than their male counterparts. Women academics often shoulder disproportionate responsibilities related to childcare, elder care, and household work, alongside professional obligations. Career interruptions due to maternity, societal expectations, and limited institutional support mechanisms such as flexible schedules and childcare facilities further exacerbate gender inequalities. Studies indicate that women faculty face slower career progression, higher stress levels, and reduced research productivity due to work–life imbalance. Consequently, work–life balance remains a critical issue for gender equity and retention of women in academia.

1.6.5 Impact Of Work–Life Imbalance On Job Satisfaction And Performance

Work–life imbalance has significant adverse effects on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance among academic staff. Excessive workload and prolonged stress contribute to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and reduced motivation. Academics experiencing poor work–life balance often report lower teaching effectiveness, diminished research creativity, and weakened engagement with students and institutions. Over time, persistent imbalance can lead to absenteeism, health problems, and intentions to leave the profession. Therefore, promoting work–life balance is not only essential for individual well-being but also for enhancing institutional productivity and academic

1.7 Concept Mental Health In Academic Institutions

1.7.1 Mental Health In Academic Institutions

Mental health in academic institutions refers to the overall psychological well-being of students, teachers, and academic staff within educational settings. Institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities are not only centers of learning but also environments where individuals experience academic demands, social interactions, and career-related pressures. A mentally healthy academic environment promotes emotional resilience, cognitive

efficiency, positive relationships, and personal growth. Conversely, poor mental health can negatively affect academic performance, job satisfaction, institutional productivity, and overall quality of life. Therefore, mental health has emerged as a critical concern in higher education globally.

1.7.2 Meaning And Scope Of Mental Health

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their community. The scope of mental health extends beyond the absence of mental illness and includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. In academic institutions, mental health encompasses stress management, emotional regulation, motivation, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and adaptability to academic and professional challenges. Promoting mental health within educational settings is essential for holistic development and lifelong learning.

Reference:

Keyes, C. L. M. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43(2), 207–222.

1.7.3 Common Mental Health Concerns Among Academicians

Academicians frequently experience mental health concerns such as stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression due to heavy workloads, research pressures, publication demands, administrative responsibilities, and job insecurity. Chronic stress may lead to emotional exhaustion and reduced professional efficacy, commonly referred to as burnout. Anxiety often arises from performance evaluations, deadlines, and competitive academic environments. Prolonged exposure to such stressors can result in depression, affecting motivation, concentration, and overall well-being. These mental health challenges not only impact individual faculty members but also affect teaching quality and institutional effectiveness.

Reference:

Maslach, C., & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience. *World*

1.7.4 Stigma Associated With Mental Health In Educational Settings

Stigma related to mental health remains a major barrier in academic institutions. Academicians often hesitate to seek professional help due to fear of discrimination, labeling, or negative impact on academic or career prospects. This stigma leads to underreporting of mental health issues and delays in intervention. Creating awareness, promoting mental health literacy, and establishing supportive institutional policies are essential to reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking behavior within educational

1.7.5 Psycho-Social Factors Affecting Academicians

- **Workload And Role Overload:** In contemporary educational institutions, academicians and students are increasingly exposed to heavy workloads and role overload due to expanding academic responsibilities, administrative duties, research expectations, and performance-oriented evaluation systems. Excessive workload often results in time pressure, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion, adversely affecting mental well-being and work–life balance. Among Faculty member, academic pressure, continuous assessments, and competitive environments further intensify stress levels, leading to burnout and reduced academic engagement. Studies have consistently shown that prolonged exposure to workload stress negatively influences job satisfaction, productivity, and psychological health in educational settings.
- **Job Insecurity And Contractual Employment:** Job insecurity has emerged as a critical concern in higher education, particularly due to the increasing reliance on contractual, temporary, and part-time appointments. Many academicians experience uncertainty regarding job continuity, promotions, and financial stability, which contributes to psychological distress, anxiety, and reduced organizational commitment. Similarly, students facing uncertain career prospects and employability concerns experience heightened stress and fear about their future. Research indicates that persistent job insecurity adversely affects motivation, job satisfaction, and overall mental health.

- **Interpersonal Relationships At The Workplace:** Interpersonal relationships play a vital role in shaping the psycho-social environment of educational institutions. Positive relationships among colleagues, students, and administrators promote cooperation, emotional well-being, and professional satisfaction. Conversely, interpersonal conflicts, lack of communication, and unhealthy competition contribute to stress, isolation, and reduced morale. Supportive and respectful workplace relationships enhance emotional resilience and create a sense of belonging, which is essential for both academicians and students to function effectively.
- **Social Support From Colleagues, Family, And Administration:** Social support from colleagues, family members, and institutional administration acts as a protective factor against psycho-social stress. Emotional, informational, and instrumental support help individuals cope with academic and professional pressures. For academicians, collegial support and administrative encouragement enhance confidence and job satisfaction, while family support helps maintain emotional balance. For students, peer and family support plays a crucial role in reducing stress and promoting academic success. Empirical studies suggest that strong social support systems significantly buffer the negative effects of stress and promote mental well-being.
- **Institutional Climate And Organizational Culture:** Institutional climate and organizational culture significantly influence the psycho-social well-being of academicians and students. A supportive, transparent, and participatory institutional environment fosters trust, motivation, and professional growth. In contrast, authoritarian leadership, lack of recognition, and poor organizational practices may create stress, dissatisfaction, and disengagement. Research highlights that positive institutional climate and healthy organizational culture contribute to improved academic outcomes, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being within educational institutions.

2. ROLE AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

A supportive work environment and effective institutional support systems play a crucial role in enhancing employee well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment. In professional settings such as educational institutions, healthcare organizations, NGOs, and social service agencies, employees often face high workloads, emotional stress, and role conflicts. Therefore, the presence of a healthy work environment supported by strong leadership, counseling services, flexible policies, and mentorship becomes essential for sustainable performance and mental well-being (WHO, 2020)

- **Importance of a Supportive Work Environment:** A supportive work environment refers to an organizational climate where employees feel safe, valued, respected, and encouraged to perform their duties effectively. Such environments promote psychological safety, reduce occupational stress, and enhance motivation among employees. Research indicates that employees working in supportive environments show higher levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty (Dollard & Bakker, 2010). Supportive work environments also contribute to reduced absenteeism and turnover rates. When institutions provide adequate resources, recognition, and opportunities for professional growth, employees are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and purpose. This is particularly important in human service professions such as social work and healthcare, where emotional labor and burnout are common (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Moreover, a positive work environment fosters collaboration, open communication, and trust between employees and management. These elements help in conflict resolution, innovation, and collective problem-solving, ultimately contributing to institutional effectiveness (Kahn, 1990).
- **Leadership Style and Administrative Support:** Leadership style significantly influences the quality of the work environment. Transformational and participative leadership styles are found to be more effective in creating

supportive organizational cultures compared to authoritarian or rigid leadership approaches. Leaders who demonstrate empathy, transparency, and inclusiveness encourage employee participation and morale (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Administrative support involves fair decision-making, clear communication, and responsiveness to employee concerns. When administrators actively support staff by providing guidance, feedback, and recognition, employees feel empowered and motivated. Studies suggest that perceived organizational support is strongly linked to reduced stress and increased job satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 2002). In institutions such as universities and NGOs, leadership plays a critical role in balancing organizational goals with employee well-being. Supportive administrators ensure manageable workloads, acknowledge achievements, and provide opportunities for capacity building, which strengthens institutional trust and commitment (Northouse, 2021).

- **Availability of Counseling and Mental Health Services:** The availability of counseling and mental health services is a vital component of institutional support systems. Work-related stress, emotional exhaustion, and mental health challenges can significantly affect employee performance and quality of life. Organizations that provide access to counseling services demonstrate a commitment to employee well-being and holistic development (WHO, 2020). Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), on-campus counseling centers, and referral systems help employees cope with personal and professional stressors. Research shows that timely psychological support reduces burnout, anxiety, and depression among employees, particularly in high-stress professions (Harvey et al., 2017). In educational and healthcare institutions, counseling services also promote emotional resilience and work-life balance. Creating awareness about mental health, reducing stigma, and ensuring confidentiality further enhance the effectiveness of these services (Corrigan et al., 2014).
- **Policies Related to Leave, Flexibility, and Workload Management:** Institutional policies related to leave, flexibility, and workload management are essential for maintaining employee well-being. Flexible work arrangements, such as

adjustable working hours, remote work options, and adequate leave provisions, help employees balance professional and personal responsibilities (Kossek et al., 2011). Excessive workload and unrealistic performance expectations often lead to stress, burnout, and reduced efficiency. Institutions that implement fair workload distribution and transparent performance evaluation systems create healthier work environments. Studies indicate that workload control and job autonomy are positively associated with job satisfaction and mental health (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Leave policies, including maternity, paternity, medical, and mental health leave, reflect an organization's sensitivity toward employee needs. Supportive leave policies not only improve employee morale but also promote gender equity and inclusiveness in the workplace (ILO, 2019).

- Role of Mentorship and Peer Support:** Mentorship and peer support systems play a significant role in professional development and emotional support within institutions. Mentorship involves guidance, encouragement, and knowledge sharing by experienced professionals to support less experienced colleagues. Effective mentorship enhances skill development, confidence, and career progression (Kram, 1985). Peer support fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility among employees. Informal peer networks help individuals cope with work-related challenges, reduce isolation, and enhance collective learning. In professions like social work and teaching, peer discussions and supervision are crucial for reflective practice and emotional well-being (Carpenter et al., 2013). Institutions that promote mentoring programs and peer learning initiatives create supportive cultures that value collaboration over competition. Such systems strengthen professional identity and contribute to long-term institutional sustainability.

3. GENDER AND WELL-BEING IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Women academicians play a crucial role in knowledge creation, teaching, research, and institutional development. Despite increased participation of women in higher education, they continue to face multiple gender-based psychosocial challenges that affect their

professional growth, mental well-being, and work satisfaction. These challenges are deeply rooted in patriarchal social structures, gendered role expectations, and institutional cultures that often remain male-dominated. Issues such as work–family conflict, emotional labor, lack of gender-sensitive policies, and limited institutional support significantly influence the academic experiences of women. Addressing these challenges through empowerment-oriented and gender-responsive institutional mechanisms is essential for achieving equity and excellence in academia.

- Gender-Based Psychosocial Challenges:** Gender-based psychosocial challenges refer to stressors arising from social expectations, discrimination, and unequal power relations that affect psychological well-being and social functioning. Women academicians often encounter subtle and overt forms of gender bias, including unequal workload distribution, limited leadership opportunities, and lack of recognition for academic contributions (Morley, 2013). These challenges lead to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. The “glass ceiling” effect remains prevalent in academic institutions, where women are underrepresented in senior positions despite comparable qualifications and performance leading to role strain and reduced self-efficacy (Oakley, 2000). Additionally, women often experience role conflict due to simultaneous expectations of being ideal professionals and primary caregivers. Such persistent psychosocial pressures can negatively affect job satisfaction, productivity, and mental health.
- Work–Family Conflict among Women Academicians:** Work–family conflict is one of the most significant psychosocial challenges faced by women academicians. It arises when professional responsibilities interfere with family roles and vice versa. Academic work often involves long working hours, research deadlines, publication pressure, administrative duties, and student mentoring, which extend beyond regular office hours (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For women, these demands intersect with socially prescribed domestic and caregiving responsibilities. Studies indicate that women academicians experience higher levels of work–family conflict compared to their male counterparts, as

domestic labor continues to be disproportionately assigned to women (Fox et al., 2011). This dual burden leads to time scarcity, chronic fatigue, and feelings of guilt for not fulfilling either role adequately. During critical career phases such as doctoral studies, tenure-track positions, or promotions, family responsibilities often constrain women's academic mobility and research productivity (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified this conflict, as women academicians managed professional duties alongside increased household and caregiving work, exacerbating stress and gender inequalities in academic output (Utoft, 2020).

- **Emotional Labor in Academic Roles:** Emotional labor refers to the process of managing emotions to meet organizational expectations, particularly in service-oriented roles (Hochschild, 1983). In academia, women are often expected to perform extensive emotional labor through mentoring students, providing emotional support, managing classroom dynamics, and participating in institutional service roles. These expectations are often gendered, with women perceived as more nurturing, empathetic, and approachable, while emotional labor contributes positively to institutional functioning and student well-being, it remains largely invisible and undervalued in performance evaluations and promotion criteria (Guy & Newman, 2004). Excessive emotional labor without adequate recognition leads to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction. Women academicians frequently experience pressure to conform to “ideal worker” norms while simultaneously fulfilling emotional caregiving roles, resulting in emotional dissonance and psychological strain. Moreover, women from marginalized backgrounds may face compounded emotional labor due to intersectional factors such as caste, race, or ethnicity, further intensifying psychosocial stress (Crenshaw, 1991).
- **Need for Gender-Sensitive Policies:** The persistence of gender-based psychosocial challenges highlights the urgent need for gender-sensitive policies in academic institutions. Gender-sensitive policies acknowledge structural inequalities and aim to create supportive environments that enable

equal participation and advancement of women. Such policies include flexible work arrangements, parental leave provisions, on-campus childcare facilities, anti-sexual harassment mechanisms, and transparent promotion criteria (UNESCO, 2017). Lack of institutional support often forces women to adopt individual coping strategies rather than benefiting from systemic solutions. Gender-neutral policies may unintentionally disadvantage women by ignoring differential needs and constraints. Therefore, policies must be explicitly gender-responsive and informed by women's lived experiences. Mentorship programs, leadership training for women, workload redistribution, and recognition of care-related responsibilities are crucial policy interventions. Institutions that implement gender-sensitive frameworks report improved work satisfaction, reduced attrition, and enhanced academic performance among women faculty members (Bilimoria & Lord, 2014).

- **Empowerment through Institutional Support:** Empowerment of women academicians is a multidimensional process involving access to resources, decision-making power, and supportive institutional cultures. Institutional support plays a critical role in enhancing women's agency, confidence, and professional growth. Empowerment-oriented institutions actively promote gender equity through inclusive governance, participatory decision-making, and accountability mechanisms. Supportive leadership, peer networks, and mentoring relationships help women navigate academic challenges and build professional resilience (Kram, 1985). Institutional recognition of women's achievements, research contributions, and leadership potential fosters a sense of belonging and motivation. Training programs focusing on career planning, work-life balance, and mental health further strengthen psychosocial well-being. Empowerment also involves transforming organizational cultures that normalize overwork and undervalue care responsibilities. By fostering collaborative, inclusive, and flexible work environments, institutions can reduce psychosocial stress and enable women academicians to thrive both professionally and personally (Acker, 1990).

4. HR INTERVENTIONS FOR FACULTY WELL-BEING

In contemporary higher education institutions, faculty members are central to achieving academic excellence, research innovation, and societal development. However, rapid changes in the academic landscape—such as increased workload, performance pressure, contractual employment, digitalization of teaching, and administrative responsibilities—have significantly affected faculty well-being. Well-being of faculty is no longer viewed as an individual concern but as an organizational responsibility requiring systematic Human Resource (HR) interventions. HR interventions play a vital role in creating healthy work environments, promoting work–life balance, addressing mental health challenges, and enhancing job satisfaction among academicians (Grawitch et al., 2006).

Faculty well-being encompasses physical, psychological, emotional, and social dimensions, all of which influence teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and institutional sustainability. In this context, HR departments in academic institutions are expected to design policies, practices, and support systems that foster a culture of care, inclusion, and resilience. This essay discusses the concept of faculty well-being, the need for HR interventions, major HR strategies, and their impact on individual and institutional outcomes.

Faculty well-being refers to a state in which academic staff experience positive mental health, job satisfaction, work–life balance, and a sense of professional fulfillment (Danna & Griffin, 1999). It includes psychological well-being (such as reduced stress and burnout), physical well-being (health and energy), social well-being (supportive collegial relationships), and emotional well-being (motivation and engagement).

Academic work is intellectually rewarding but emotionally demanding. Faculty members often face role overload, role conflict, publication pressure, student-related stress, and job insecurity, particularly in contractual and early-career positions (Kinman & Wray, 2018). Without adequate HR support, these challenges can lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, and reduced commitment to the profession. Therefore, structured HR interventions are essential to sustain faculty well-being and institutional effectiveness.

5. NEED FOR HR INTERVENTIONS IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

The need for HR interventions arises from the growing psychosocial risks in academic workplaces. Studies indicate that academicians experience higher levels of occupational stress compared to many other professions due to high expectations, constant evaluation, and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Traditional HR practices focused primarily on recruitment and performance appraisal are insufficient to address these complex challenges. Institutions that fail to invest in faculty well-being risk declining morale, reduced academic quality, absenteeism, and high turnover (Barkhuizen et al., 2014).

5.1 Major Hr Interventions For Faculty Well-Being

1. Supportive Leadership and Organizational Culture

One of the most significant HR interventions is the promotion of supportive and empathetic leadership. Leadership style directly influences faculty well-being, job satisfaction, and psychological safety (Arnold, 2017). HR departments can organize leadership development programs that train academic leaders in emotional intelligence, participatory decision-making, and conflict management.

A positive organizational culture characterized by trust, transparency, and respect fosters a sense of belonging among faculty members. When faculty feel valued and heard, their stress levels reduce, and motivation increases (Kinman & Jones, 2008).

2. Workload Management and Role Clarity

Unequal workload distribution and role ambiguity are major sources of stress in academic institutions. HR interventions aimed at workload management include transparent workload policies, clear role definitions, and realistic performance expectations. Teaching, research, and administrative duties should be balanced equitably to prevent role overload (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). HR departments can introduce workload audits, flexible scheduling, and reduced administrative burden to help faculty manage their

responsibilities more effectively. Such interventions contribute significantly to work–life balance and job satisfaction.

3. Flexible Work and Work–Life Balance Policies

Work–life balance is a critical determinant of faculty well-being. HR policies such as flexible working hours, hybrid teaching models, leave provisions, and sabbatical opportunities enable faculty members to balance professional and personal responsibilities (Kosseck et al., 2014). Gender-sensitive HR interventions are particularly important, as women faculty often experience greater work–family conflict due to caregiving roles. Policies related to maternity and paternity leave, childcare facilities, and flexible tenure timelines promote equity and well-being (O’Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005).

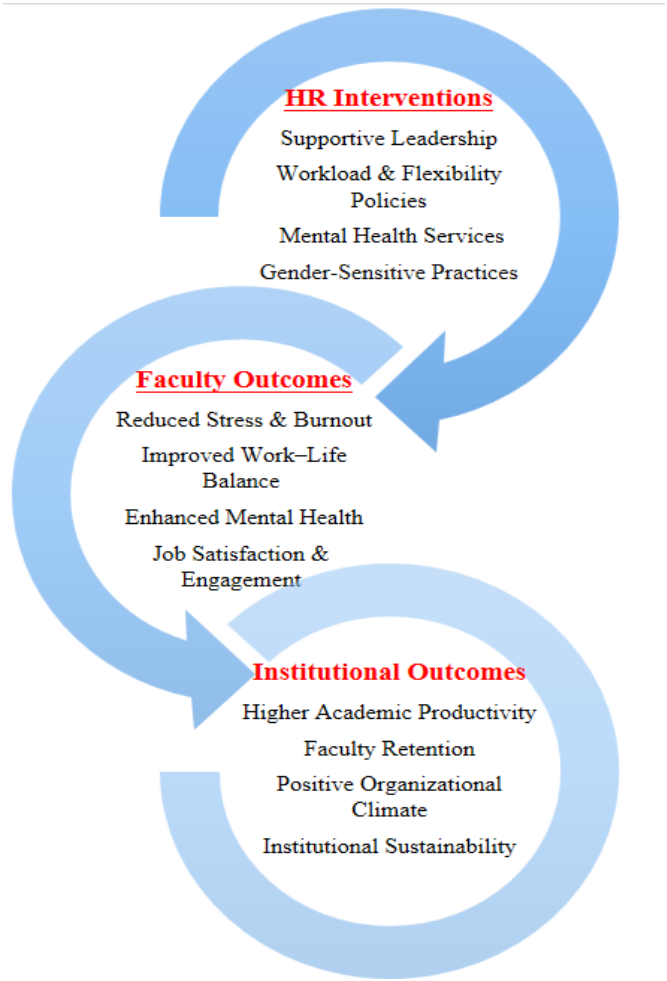
4. Mental Health Support and Counseling Services

Mental health promotion is a core HR intervention for faculty well-being. Institutions can establish employee assistance programs (EAPs), counseling centers, and stress management workshops to support faculty mental health. Confidential counseling services help faculty cope with anxiety, depression, and burnout without fear of stigma (Sharma & Devi, 2021). HR-led awareness campaigns and training programs can normalize discussions around mental health and encourage early help-seeking behavior. Preventive mental health interventions are more effective than reactive approaches in academic settings (WHO, 2014).

5. Professional Development and Career Support

Opportunities for professional growth enhance psychological well-being and organizational commitment. HR interventions such as mentoring programs, research support, faculty development workshops, and recognition of academic achievements contribute to a sense of purpose and professional identity (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Recognition and reward systems that value teaching excellence, research contributions, and community service motivate faculty and reduce feelings of underappreciation, which are common stressors in academia.

Conceptual Diagram: *HR Interventions for Faculty Well-Being*



(This conceptual model explains how HR interventions act as mediating mechanisms between organizational policies and faculty well-being outcomes)

6. IMPACT OF HR INTERVENTIONS ON INSTITUTIONS

Empirical studies suggest that effective HR interventions lead to improved faculty well-being, which in turn enhances teaching quality, research output, and student satisfaction (Grawitch et al., 2006). Faculty members who experience psychological support and work–life balance demonstrate higher organizational commitment

and lower intention to leave the profession. From an institutional perspective, investing in faculty well-being strengthens employer branding, attracts talented academicians, and promotes long-term sustainability. Well-being-oriented HR practices are therefore not merely welfare measures but strategic investments in human capital.

HR interventions for faculty well-being are essential in addressing the growing psychosocial challenges within academic institutions. Supportive leadership, equitable workload management, flexible work policies, mental health services, gender-sensitive practices, and professional development initiatives collectively contribute to a healthy academic workplace. Faculty well-being is a shared responsibility that requires commitment from institutional leadership and HR systems. In the competitive and demanding environment of higher education, institutions that prioritize faculty well-being are more likely to achieve academic excellence, innovation, and social relevance. Thus, HR interventions must be integrated into institutional policies as a core component of sustainable academic governance.

7. HR INTERVENTIONS FOR FACULTY WELL-BEING

7.1 Indian Context And Ugc–Nep 2020 Linkage

Faculty Well-Being in the Indian Higher Education Context, In the Indian higher education system, faculty well-being has emerged as a critical concern due to rapid expansion of universities, increasing student enrolment, regulatory pressures, and evolving academic roles. Indian academicians are expected to simultaneously fulfill responsibilities related to teaching, research, administration, accreditation (NAAC/NIRF), student mentoring, and community engagement. These multiple demands often lead to workload pressure, role overload, and occupational stress, particularly in public universities and self-financed private institutions (Sharma & Jyoti, 2019).

Additionally, a large proportion of faculty members in India are employed on ad-hoc, contractual, or guest faculty positions, leading to job insecurity, lack of career progression, and psychological distress. Gender disparities further intensify well-being challenges, as women faculty often face work–family conflict, limited leadership

opportunities, and emotional labor in academic roles (Kumari & Afroz, 2013). In this context, HR interventions are essential to ensure not only faculty welfare but also quality and sustainability of higher education institutions in India.

8. UGC PERSPECTIVE ON FACULTY WELL-BEING

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has gradually recognized the importance of faculty well-being through various regulations, quality frameworks, and advisory guidelines. UGC emphasizes academic autonomy, professional ethics, and quality teaching, all of which are closely linked to faculty motivation and mental health. Performance-Based Appraisal System (PBAS) and Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) aim to provide structured career progression; however, excessive focus on quantitative indicators has also contributed to stress and publication pressure among faculty (UGC, 2018).

From an HR perspective, Indian universities are encouraged by UGC to adopt:

1. Transparent recruitment and promotion systems
2. Faculty development programs (FDPs)
3. Mentoring and research support mechanisms
4. Grievance redressal and anti-harassment cells

These mechanisms, when implemented sensitively, function as HR interventions that enhance psychological safety, job satisfaction, and institutional trust among faculty members.

8.1 Nep 2020 And Faculty Well-Being: A Paradigm Shift

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift in India's approach to higher education by explicitly recognizing the role of teachers as the cornerstone of educational transformation. NEP 2020 emphasizes faculty motivation, autonomy, professional development, and holistic well-being as prerequisites for achieving excellence in teaching and research (Ministry of Education, 2020).

8.1.1 Key NEP 2020 Provisions Related to Faculty Well-Being

NEP 2020 advocates several HR-related reforms that directly contribute to faculty well-being:

1. **Autonomy and Reduced Administrative Burden:** NEP 2020 proposes greater academic and administrative autonomy to institutions and faculty members, allowing them to focus more on teaching and research rather than excessive bureaucratic work. Reduced administrative burden is likely to lower stress and burnout among academicians.
2. **Merit-Based and Transparent Career Progression:** The policy recommends transparent, merit-based recruitment and promotion systems, which can reduce anxiety, favoritism, and uncertainty in academic careers. Such systems enhance perceptions of fairness and psychological well-being.
3. **Continuous Professional Development (CPD):** NEP 2020 stresses continuous professional development through multidisciplinary training, pedagogical innovation, and research support. HR-led CPD initiatives enhance faculty competence, self-efficacy, and professional identity, contributing positively to mental well-being.
4. **Faculty Empowerment and Motivation:** By recognizing faculty as intellectual leaders rather than mere content deliverers, NEP 2020 promotes empowerment and intrinsic motivation. Empowered faculty members experience higher job satisfaction and emotional well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017).
5. **Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Policies:** NEP 2020 highlights equity, inclusion, and diversity in higher education. HR interventions aligned with NEP principles—such as flexible work arrangements, childcare support, and safe work environments—are particularly beneficial for women faculty and marginalized groups.

8.1.2 HR Interventions Aligned With Nep 2020 In Indian Institutions

In alignment with NEP 2020, HR departments in Indian universities can adopt the following faculty well-being interventions:

1. Flexible workload models aligned with teaching–research balance
2. Faculty mentoring systems for early-career and contractual teachers
3. Mental health counseling units within campuses

4. Well-being and stress management workshops under faculty development programs
5. Leadership training for academic administrators emphasizing empathy and emotional intelligence

Such HR practices resonate with NEP 2020's vision of transforming higher education into a learner-centered, teacher-empowered ecosystem.

8.1.3 Illustrative Indian Case Example (Indicative)

Several Indian universities have begun implementing HR practices aligned with NEP 2020. For instance, select central and state universities have introduced Faculty Development Centres (FDCs) offering stress management, yoga, mindfulness, and academic mentoring programs. These initiatives have been associated with improved faculty engagement, reduced burnout, and enhanced teaching effectiveness, demonstrating the positive impact of structured HR interventions on well-being (Aithal & Kumar, 2021).

In the Indian context, faculty well-being is deeply intertwined with systemic challenges such as workload pressure, job insecurity, and performance-driven evaluation systems. UGC regulations and NEP 2020 provide a strong policy framework for addressing these challenges through HR-led institutional reforms. Effective implementation of NEP-aligned HR interventions can transform academic institutions into supportive, inclusive, and psychologically healthy workplaces. Faculty well-being should therefore be treated as a strategic priority in Indian higher education, essential for achieving the broader goals of quality, equity, and excellence envisioned in NEP 2020.

9. CONCLUSION

Well-being, work-life balance, and mental health are indispensable components of a healthy and productive academic ecosystem. The present chapter has comprehensively examined these interconnected dimensions within academic institutions, highlighting the growing psycho-social challenges faced by faculty

members and students. Academic work, while intellectually fulfilling, is increasingly characterized by excessive workload, role overload, blurred work–life boundaries, and performance-driven evaluation systems, which significantly affect psychological well-being and professional satisfaction.

The discussion grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model and Role Stress Theory clearly demonstrates that an imbalance between high job demands and insufficient institutional resources leads to stress, burnout, and disengagement. Conversely, supportive leadership, autonomy, social support, and flexible work policies function as critical resources that enhance resilience and work engagement. The chapter also underscores the gendered nature of well-being in academia, revealing how women academicians experience heightened work–family conflict, emotional labor, and structural inequalities, thereby necessitating gender-sensitive institutional responses.

Mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression are no longer peripheral concerns but central issues affecting academic performance, teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional sustainability. Despite the prevalence of these concerns, stigma and lack of accessible support services often hinder timely intervention. Hence, the role of institutional support systems, including counseling services, mentorship, peer support, and positive organizational culture, becomes crucial.

The chapter further establishes that Human Resource interventions are strategic tools for promoting faculty well-being rather than mere welfare measures. In the Indian context, alignment with UGC guidelines and the National Education Policy 2020 provides a robust policy framework to foster faculty empowerment, professional development, autonomy, and holistic well-being. Ultimately, academic institutions that prioritize well-being create healthier, more inclusive, and sustainable environments. Investing in the well-being of academicians and students is essential not only for individual health but also for achieving long-term academic excellence and social relevance.

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