



**ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON INNOVATION IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

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**Abstract:**

The need for Transformational Leadership and innovation is increasing in Higher Education with the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, where educational institutions' emphasis should be on outcome-based education, innovative curriculum and pedagogy with learner and industry engagement, research and development, employability and entrepreneurship with continuous evaluation for the learning outcomes. The researcher through the existing literature tries to find out whether Transformational Leadership has a significant role in innovation in the Higher Education Sector. The existing literature shows that there is a significant relationship between Transformational Leadership and innovation. Transformational leaders promote creative ideas and effectively use idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration which are critical for organizational innovation. The researcher also observed that the development and execution of innovation in higher education has a bearing on all the system elements such as components, relationships, and functions. This study is limited to secondary data from the Review of existing Literature.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Innovation, Higher Education

**Introduction:**

Every organization has to innovate to survive and grow in the competitive world and so also educational institutions. Social and industrial revolutions have forced the education system to revolutionize itself to get ready for the changes with new skill sets and a great sense of responsibility. It starts from the curriculum design with emphasis on research and innovation, innovative pedagogy, assessment tools, learner engagement, and industry-academia linkage which bring out the best in the teacher and the learner, and enhance their employability and entrepreneurship skills. The success of innovation demands Transformational Leadership right from the management, and heads of the institutions to teachers.

**Statement of the Problem:**

India needs Transformational Leadership in higher education to promote innovation and thereby become Atma Nirbhar, improve and sustain its global ranking. The entire process of innovation in the education system needs intellectual stimulation which is one of the four key components of Transformational Leadership. Transformative leaders in education with their idealized influence and individual focus can motivate their followers to explore new ideas, and new opportunities and thereby create more and more entrepreneurs. Therefore, the researcher felt the need for studying the 'Role of Transformational Leadership on Innovation in Higher Education'.

**Objectives of the Study:**

- To understand the relationship between Transformational Leadership in organizations
- To identify the relationship between Transformational Leadership and innovation



- To assess and analyze the impact of Transformational Leadership in promoting innovation in Higher education.

**Methodology:**

The researcher has extensively reviewed the literature published on Transformational Leadership and Innovation. The articles that matched the research title were searched from various journal databases like Ebsco-host, Sciencedirect.com, Research Gate, University News, etc. The second step included exploring articles related to Transformational Leadership and Innovation in Education, followed by Higher Education.

**Review of Literature:**

**Transformational Leadership:**

The concept of Transformational Leadership was introduced by James Burns in 1978 through his book named Leadership. Transformational Leadership includes the ability to recognize the change, create a vision, guide changes and execute the changes effectively. It has four elements namely, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Transformational Leaders constantly improve organizations with new ideas and promote innovative ideas for problem-solving (Singh, 2022).

**Innovation:**

“Innovation is the intentional introduction and application within the role, group or organization of ideas, processes, products or procedures, new to the relevant unit of adoption, designed to significantly benefit the individual, the group, organization, and society.” (West & Farr, 1990). Innovation includes the implementation of ideas for restructuring or saving costs, improved communication, new technology for production processes, and changed organizational structure and personnel plans or programs. (Robins, 1996).

Organisational Innovation could be administrative, technical, radical, or incremental, where administrative innovation is a change in organizational structure and processes and technical innovation includes products, processes, and technologies. Radical innovations are fundamental changes in processes that lead to transformation in an organization or industry whereas incremental innovations are a marginal departure from the current systems and reinforce the present capabilities of an organization (Naguib, et al., 2018). Process innovations are usually tacit, systemic, and complex, and implementation costs are more than product innovations due to the increased coordination costs, the higher costs of training, the difficulty in transferring learning from one innovation decision situation to another is hard to codify, and the struggle of integrating the new knowledge with other “communities-of-practice” within the organization (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009).

**Transformational Leadership and Innovation:**

Transformational leaders promote creative ideas within their organizations and their behaviors act as creativity-enhancing forces. Individualized consideration serves as a reward for the followers and intellectual stimulation enhances exploratory thinking, whereas inspirational motivation encourages the idea-generation process (Sosik et al., 1998). Transformational leaders use inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation which are critical for organizational innovation (Elkins and Keller, 2003).

A Turkish study that aimed at examining the impact of transformational leadership on organizational innovation (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009) developed a model of transformational leadership that included the effects on organizational innovation and was tested on employees and



managers of micro and small-sized information technology companies engaged in software development. The study investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation in a newly developing industry in the country, in contrast to the creativity and innovation theories that have been developed and tested mostly in Western countries.

Findings of a study in an Australian Research and Development organization (Paulsen, et al., 2013) point out that the transformational style of leadership produces better results with innovative products, processes, and team members who are engaged in a more creative team atmosphere. The study from Malaysian logistics companies (Samad, 2012) concludes that Innovation and transformational leadership significantly boost organizational performance. It also emphasizes that Leadership style has a significant contribution to subordinates' outcomes such as performance, satisfaction, and perception of the leaders' effectiveness. Wright (2015) studied that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and innovation climate. A study done in Iran (Khalili, 2016) confirms that there is a direct relationship between Transformational Leadership and employees' creativity and innovation. Employees also perceived a supportive climate for innovation through Transformational Leadership.

#### **Transformational Leadership and Innovation in Education:**

The results of a school study (Sagnak, et al., 2015) showed that transformational leadership is an imperative predictor of psychological empowerment and innovative climate in schools. As Transformational Leadership increases psychological empowerment and in turn, the innovative climate will increase. It has been found that psychological empowerment somewhat intercedes the connection between transformational leadership and an innovative environment. Transformational leaders empower their employees to perform independently from supervision and control. Employees feel empowered in an environment created by transformational leaders which has a positive relationship with group cohesiveness, group efficacy, and organizational commitment.

#### **Transformational Leadership and Innovation in Higher Education:**

Higher Education plays a vital role in the social and political processes and faces challenges like retaining quality, sustenance, and ability to compete with global standards. It needs reforms in the curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation with the focus on promoting regular, formative, and competency-based learning and development, assessment for learning, and testing higher order skills to bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity, which in turn would improve the employability of the learners (Senapati, et al., 2023).

Faculty members have the opportunity to implement new ways of learning in the classroom, such as blended learning, problem-based learning, or other innovative methods; they act to facilitate the learning process, rather than solely providing knowledge. Along with opportunities, Higher Educational Institutions are facing various challenges in innovation about online education, hybrid mode, and traditional forms of education. The development and execution of innovation in higher education have a bearing on all the systems elements such as components, relationships, and functions where the growing bearing is observed on the research and engagement (Brennan, et al., 2014). The research was done in public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Iraq (Al-Husseini, et al., 2016) and it reveals that transformational leadership plays an important role in enhancing product and process innovation in higher education. A cross-sectional survey employed for teacher educators across Malaysia (Supermane, 2019) reveals that there is a significant impact of transformational leadership on innovation in teaching and learning processes. A study of higher education administrative staff (Owusu, 2021) revealed that engagement,



motivation, communication flow, communication utilization, and decision-making strongly enhance the participative process which is essential for promoting innovation and these five factors strongly defined transformational leadership's influence on innovation.

#### **Findings and Conclusion:**

The study found that transformational leadership is necessary to implement innovative practices which is the need of the hour while implementing the National Education Policy 2020, which demands a lot of changes in the existing Higher Education System in India in the form of introducing new and multidisciplinary courses, emphasizing on the outcome based education, active learner participation, increasing collaboration with industry and academia, employability and entrepreneurship. The researcher focused only on the existing literature available through various sources and the study showed a substantial relationship between Transformational Leadership and innovation. Further research needs to be done with the help of primary data to find out how Transformational Leadership impacts the Innovation process while implementing the National Education Policy in Higher Education.

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