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## **FACULTY ENTREPRENEURSHIP: TRANSFORMING THE EDUCATOR’S IDENTITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Key Words:**

Faculty  
Entrepreneurship,  
Higher Education,  
research  
commercialization  
,start-up  
companies,  
University-  
industry link

Over the past few decades, there has been a substantial shift in the higher education scenario. Instead than only being locations for teaching and research, universities are today expected to act as centres for social influence, economic growth, and innovation. This shift has given rise to the concept of faculty entrepreneurship, which refers to the involvement of academic staff in entrepreneurial activities such as research commercialization, start-up companies, consultancy, and innovation-led instruction. This research adds to the literature by viewing faculty entrepreneurship as a growing academic identity rather than a performance statistic. It presents entrepreneurship as a change in educator identity, stressing academic agency, social mission and intrinsic incentives beyond financial gains. Thus, this theoretical study investigates the idea of faculty entrepreneurship, tracking its definition, development, key elements, advantages, difficulties, and moral ramifications.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This article explores the intersection of entrepreneurship and education in response to ongoing changes within universities. It argues that the current higher education system lacks the capacity to effectively nurture students' motivation, competencies, and skills related to innovation and entrepreneurship (Blenker et al., 2008). To bridge this gap, a shift is needed in teaching methods, pedagogical approaches, and educational structures—areas where universities currently fall short (Jain, T.K. 2019). Implementing entrepreneurship education requires not just curricular adjustments but broader transformations in pedagogy, didactics, and institutional culture.

In parallel, the concept of faculty entrepreneurship has gained prominence, especially in research universities where academic staff face increasing opportunities and expectations to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Bird & Allen, 1989). A brief drop in the productivity of scholarly research is linked to faculty entrepreneurship (Czarnitzki & Toole, 2010).

Faculty entrepreneurship—where academic knowledge is translated into commercial ventures (Brustureanu, B. 2018) has grown significantly over the past decades, moving from a marginal idea to a recognized field influenced by personal, institutional, and systemic factors. The shift began notably in the U.S. with the Bayh-Dole Act (1980) (Mowery, et., 2001) and has taken root in India through policy initiatives like the National Innovation and Start-up Policy and efforts around Atmanirbhar Bharat. While the pathways differ, both contexts reflect a transformation from knowledge creation to application.

Research indicates that faculty members' entrepreneurial experience and inclination towards commercialization significantly impact the formation

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of university spin-outs (Marion et al., 2012). This study aims to analyze the driving forces, key constructs, benefits, challenges, and ethical implications associated with faculty entrepreneurship in the evolving academic environment so that Faculty Entrepreneurship can be practised by all aspiring faculties without stamping it as a privilege in Universities or centres of higher education.

This study views faculty entrepreneurship as a growing scholarly identity rather than a measurement statistic. The originality is in combining previous research through the perspective of institutional, cultural, and economic pressures. Studies have examined how university entrepreneurship ecosystems influence faculty engagement in entrepreneurial activities (Moraes et al., 2020; Loaiza Torres et al., 2024). Unlike previous research, which frequently focuses on ecosystem-level analysis, this study critically examines individual-level experiences, ethical issues, and role tensions, providing a comprehensive perspective of faculty entrepreneurship in the Indian environment post-NEP 2020

### **1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is important because it looks at how faculty roles are changing in higher education, where institutions are expected to play a bigger part in social advancement, economic growth, and innovation.

The study offers theoretical clarity by examining the notion of faculty entrepreneurship, which encompasses research commercialization, startups, consulting, and innovation-driven teaching. The study provides theoretical clarity and examines the institutional, cultural, and policy-related factors that shape these activities. It also addresses the key constructs, potential benefits and ethical concerns linked to faculty entrepreneurship, offering valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers seeking to support such efforts while preserving the

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core academic values of universities.

The study perceives faculty entrepreneurship as a process of transformational identity, surpassing conventional perspectives that confine it to economic or institutional endeavours. The study provides a new, multifaceted perspective of faculty responsibilities in the changing knowledge and innovation ecosystem by introducing theoretical concepts like entrepreneurial identity institutional context and intrinsic motivation. In keeping with current higher education reforms like India's NEP 2020, it closes a significant vacuum in the research and offers practical advice for academic leaders and policymakers on how to establish environments that encourage creativity, academic agency and social impact.

### **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Higher education institutions are expected to promote entrepreneurship, yet traditional teaching methods and institutional structures often limit faculty engagement in entrepreneurial activities. There is a need to explore how academic systems can better support faculty entrepreneurship and align educational practices with broader innovation goals.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of this theoretical paper are:

1. To explore the institutional, economic, and cultural factors driving faculty entrepreneurship
2. To assess the benefits of faculty engaging in entrepreneurial endeavors
3. To understand the challenges, and ethical implications of faculty engaging in entrepreneurial endeavors.

#### **1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Sharma, L. (2016) investigated the institutional barriers to academic entrepreneurship in higher education institutions in Uttarakhand by interviewing 68 senior educationists. The study found that poor entrepreneurial ecosystem, lack of entrepreneurial orientation, job-oriented academic focus, inadequate subject content, absence of trained or specialized faculty, and ineffective teaching methods were major hindrances to promoting academic entrepreneurship in the region.

Baporikar, N. (2016) conducted a study on how to understand academic entrepreneurship in India has been the enabler to scale innovations. It also analyzed to bring out the factors that have key impact on the growth of academic entrepreneurship. Best practices was also delivered so as to reckon the significance of academic entrepreneurship which is of both theoretical and practical importance for both developed and developing countries.

Sahu, D.K. (2023) conducted a systematic literature review on faculty entrepreneurial engagement across teaching, research, and entrepreneurship since 2011. The study highlights two dimensions of engagement—academic entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial academics—operating through formal and informal means, influenced by individual, organizational, and institutional factors. Faculty involvement is often driven by a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem and organizational motivation.

Existing studies on academic entrepreneurship in India offer limited insights into how institutional, cultural, and policy factors—especially post-NEP 2020—shape faculty engagement in entrepreneurial activities. There is also a lack of critical analysis on the benefits, challenges, and ethical implications of such engagement from the faculty's perspective.

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## **Factors driving faculty entrepreneurship**

### **1. Institutional Factors**

Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the opportunities and constraints for faculty entrepreneurship. Key institutional drivers include: Policy Frameworks and Incentives provided by Academic institutions such as organized assistance, revenue-sharing plans, innovation centers, sabbatical policies for start-up development, and technology transfer offices, have a tendency to encourage more faculty members to pursue entrepreneurship. At the departmental or institutional level, visionary leadership should be practiced were Faculty members are encouraged to explore entrepreneurial endeavors, creativity, multidisciplinary co-operation and the like. Establishments that grant academic autonomy enable their faculty to experiment with novel and creative methods of producing and disseminating knowledge.

### **2. Economic Factors**

Universities are under more pressure than ever to support economic growth in the global knowledge economy, which gives academics more reasons to interact with markets: Decreased Public Funding from government for higher education forces universities and faculty to look for ways to make money, such as by commercializing research. Moreover, Faculty are encouraged to match their research agendas with market demands through industry-funded studies and public-private collaborations. Workplace Pressures and Rewards are enhanced in highly competitive academic settings, through entrepreneurial success.

### **3. Cultural Factors**

The way that academics and the general public view entrepreneurship is greatly influenced by cultural factors: This happens through Academic

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Identity Change of the Professor's reputation as a solitary scholar to that of a professional who is a hybrid of educator, researcher, and innovator with a more entrepreneurial mindset. Furthermore, Faculty goals and local institutional practices are influenced by exposure to international entrepreneurial university models, such as those in the US, Israel, or Singapore. Besides, Social Expectations from Faculty are beyond academic publications that is to make a noticeable contribution to social and economic growth.

### **Theoretical Constructs/Variables**

The following are the core constructs of the study based on existing literature:

1. Faculty Entrepreneurship

Faculty entrepreneurship includes activities like research commercialization and academic consulting (Perkmann et al., 2013).

2. Institutional Support

Strong institutional support in the form of infrastructure, policy, and leadership has a big impact on faculty members' involvement in entrepreneurial endeavors. (Clarysse, Tartari, & Salter, 2011).

3. Faculty Motivation

When it comes to their entrepreneurial pursuits, faculty members are motivated by a mix of intellectual curiosity reputational objectives and money incentives. (Lam, 2011).

4. Academic Identity Shift

The rise of entrepreneurial positions creates a hybrid educator-innovator identity and undermines conventional academic identities. (Henkel, 2005).

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## 5. Ethical Responsibility

Ethical concerns are raised by faculty entrepreneurship, especially when business interests jeopardize academic integrity. (Resnik, 2007).

### **Benefits of Faculty Entrepreneurship**

Faculty entrepreneurship makes it easier to apply scholarly research to practical settings so as to make innovations in the humanities, sciences, and technology to reach a wider audience.

Through industry projects, incubators, and start-ups, entrepreneurial teachers can provide students with practical learning experiences.

Faculty Entrepreneurship promotes employability and innovation skills among the students.

Partnerships, spin-off businesses, and intellectual property licensing can provide financial advantages to institutions and faculty which would improve their motivation and retention in the workplace.

By encouraging collaborative research, funding opportunities, and societal relevance, entrepreneurial activity strengthens linkages between the Industries and educational institutions.

Successful faculty members who pursue entrepreneurship become well-known and have an impact on the academic and non-academic sectors.

### **Challenges Faced by Entrepreneurial Faculty**

Academic obligations may be compromised or overload may result from juggling teaching, research, service, and entrepreneurial activities.

The infrastructure and policies regarding revenue-sharing, sabbaticals, and intellectual property rights are lacking in many institutions.

Although faculty members possess extensive subject expertise, they may be lacking in the entrepreneurial skills like commercial savvy, legal knowledge, or networking.

Faculty from business fields are frequently given preference in entrepreneurial engagement, which marginalizes individuals in the humanities, arts, and basic sciences.

### **Ethical Implications of Faculty Entrepreneurship**

Conflicts of interest between institutional loyalty and personal gain may arise for faculty members engaged in business endeavors.

Commercial demands may jeopardize the objectivity and integrity of academic research by manipulating outcomes to appeal to investors.

Entrepreneurial success may create inequalities among faculty, departments, or students which may create concentration of resources in areas with commercial potential.

Students should not be taken advantage of for free or poorly compensated labour, in the name of faculty guided projects and so clear guidelines are required.

### **1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the theoretical analysis of faculty entrepreneurship, the following recommendations are proposed to guide institutional practices and policy development:

1. Institutions should develop comprehensive policies that clearly delineate the boundaries and responsibilities associated with faculty entrepreneurship.

2. Professional development programs should be instituted to build faculty competencies in key areas such as intellectual property (IP) rights, ethical considerations in commercialization, startup management, and business strategy.
3. Universities should expand their reward systems to value not only commercial ventures but also social and pedagogical innovations.
4. Innovation often emerges at the intersection of disciplines. Institutions should encourage cross-departmental collaboration, joint ventures, and interdisciplinary research clusters.
5. Entrepreneurial initiatives must be designed to be inclusive, ensuring that faculty from all disciplines, backgrounds, and identities have equitable access to resources, networks, and opportunities.

## **1.6 CONCLUSION**

This paper offers an original conceptual synthesis of faculty entrepreneurship by bridging literature from higher education, innovation, and identity studies. The author proposes a redefinition of the educator's role, advancing the idea that faculty entrepreneurship is not just an institutional initiative but a transformative identity process driven by individual, and socio-cultural factors, and has contributed meaningfully to innovation and national development. Despite this progress, ecosystem limitations, and organizational challenges highlight the need for deeper

research into the dynamics shaping faculty entrepreneurial engagement. Thus Faculty entrepreneurship in India driven by institutional, individual, and socio-cultural factors, can contribute meaningfully to innovation and national development.

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