

Guest Faculty in the Era of NEP 2020: Challenges and Opportunities in Odisha's Universities

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Abstract: *The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has generated new debates on the future of higher education in India, especially in terms of faculty recruitment, professional development, and institutional autonomy. Within this reformist framework, the role and condition of guest faculty who constitute a significant portion of teaching staff in Odisha's universities remain largely neglected. Despite contributing substantially to teaching, research, and mentoring, guest faculty often experience structural marginalisation, including low remuneration, absence of job security, lack of recognition, and unequal treatment by senior colleagues and authorities. This paper critically examines the challenges and opportunities for guest faculty in Odisha within the context of NEP 2020. Using a qualitative and descriptive approach, supplemented by case-based insights from Odisha's universities, it highlights the systemic neglect of guest faculty, explores their lived experiences, and assesses the potential of NEP 2020 to create space for professional dignity and academic recognition. The paper argues that while NEP 2020 provides opportunities for teacher training, research incentives, and pathways for better integration into institutional structures, the absence of concrete provisions for employment security risks perpetuating precariousness. Policy reforms at both the state and central levels are therefore essential to ensure that guest faculty, as indispensable contributors to Odisha's higher education system, receive due recognition, dignity, and stability.*

Keywords: Guest Faculty, NEP 2020, Higher Education, Odisha, Academic Precarity, University System, Policy Challenges

1. Introduction

The higher education system in India has been undergoing a period of transformation, particularly with the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which envisions a more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary framework. Among its many promises such as increased autonomy of institutions, emphasis on research and the restructuring of academic governance NEP 2020 highlights the centrality of teachers as the cornerstone of educational reform. Yet, this vision is paradoxically juxtaposed with the ground reality of faculty recruitment and employment across India, where precarious and temporary forms of teaching appointments dominate. In states such as Odisha, the reliance on guest faculty has become a defining feature of universities and colleges. These teachers are engaged to fill the gaps created by inadequate recruitment of permanent staff, rising student enrolments, and expanding courses under higher education institutions. While guest faculty play an indispensable role in sustaining the system, their experiences are characterised by insecurity, low pay, and lack of institutional respect. This contradiction between their undeniable academic contribution and their marginalised professional status raises critical questions about the effectiveness of higher education reforms in addressing their plight. The conditions of guest faculty are not unique to Odisha; they reflect a nationwide trend of contractualization and casualization of academic labour. However, the regional specificities of Odisha including budgetary constraints, bureaucratic decision-making, and socio-cultural hierarchies within academic institutions intensify these challenges. Moreover, Odisha's higher education system, like many others in India, is deeply influenced by socio-political factors; including caste, gender,

and regional inequality, which further shape the experiences of guest faculty.

Against this backdrop, the present paper seeks to explore the following critical questions:

- 1) What are the challenges faced by guest faculty in Odisha's universities in the context of NEP 2020?
- 2) How do systemic factors such as administrative practices, academic hierarchies, and policy gaps exacerbate these challenges?
- 3) Does NEP 2020 offer meaningful opportunities for guest faculty in terms of professional growth, recognition, and integration into the academic system?
- 4) What policy interventions are required to ensure dignity, stability, and fairness for guest faculty in Odisha?

2. Rationale of the Study

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's higher education system, yet it overlooks the conditions of guest faculty, who form a major part of teaching staff in Odisha's universities. Despite their crucial role in sustaining academic functions, guest lecturers face low pay, job insecurity, and lack of recognition. This study is important because it examines the challenges and opportunities for guest faculty under NEP 2020, highlighting how policy gaps and institutional practices affect their professional lives. By exploring these issues, the study seeks to promote equity, dignity, and policy reforms for guest faculty, ensuring that NEP 2020's vision of quality and inclusive education truly benefits all educators.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the NEP 2020's vision of teacher empowerment and inclusive education, guest faculty in Odisha continue to face low pay, job insecurity, and lack of recognition. They play a vital role in sustaining universities but remain excluded from policy benefits and professional development opportunities. The gap between NEP 2020's promises and the lived realities of guest faculty highlights the urgent need for policy reforms to ensure dignity, stability, and fair treatment for these educators.

3. Literature Review

Academic Precarity and Contractualization of Teaching

Tilak (2015) conceptualizes the phenomenon of "academic precarity" as a systemic outcome of neoliberal reforms that prioritize cost efficiency over academic stability. He argues that the contractualization of teaching has led to an informal academic workforce that sustains institutions without institutional rights. Sharma (2019) similarly identifies a dual structure within universities comprising secure, tenured faculty and a marginalized group of temporary instructors leading to disparities in remuneration, workload, and participation. The University Grants Commission (UGC, 2003, 2010) issued broad guidelines for contractual teachers, but the lack of binding implementation mechanisms has perpetuated inconsistencies across states and institutions.

Status of Guest Faculty in Indian Universities

Mukherjee (2018) examines ad-hoc appointments in Delhi University, noting that temporary teachers face constant uncertainty despite carrying equivalent workloads to their permanent counterparts. Singh (2020) analyses Punjab and Haryana universities, showing how litigation by ad-hoc faculty has prompted procedural safeguards, though substantial reforms remain absent. In the context of Kerala, Joseph (2021) highlights the introduction of standardized honoraria and participation of guest faculty in Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) as a partial success in addressing inequity. Collectively, these studies reveal the persistence of precarious employment as a defining feature of Indian academia.

Odisha's Context and Regional Experiences

Research specific to Odisha remains limited but points to similar structural patterns. Das (2020) finds that nearly half of the teaching positions in Odisha's state universities are filled by guest lecturers, many of whom face delayed salary payments and limited access to institutional resources. Mohanty (2022) emphasizes that while guest faculty sustain the state's higher education system, they continue to lack recognition, identity, and representation in academic governance. Reports from The Samaja (2015) and Prameya (2018) describe guest lecturers as "second-class academics," highlighting widespread social and institutional marginalization. These accounts indicate that Odisha's dependence on guest faculty has become a structural necessity rather than a temporary measure.

NEP 2020 and Faculty Empowerment

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores teacher excellence, professional autonomy, and continuous professional development (CPD). Gopinath (2021) interprets NEP's emphasis on professional training as a potential avenue for academic renewal. However, Rajan (2022) and Bhattacharya (2023) criticize the policy for its silence on employment security, arguing that reforms centred on quality and innovation cannot succeed without addressing the precarious working conditions of temporary faculty. They contend that the exclusion of guest faculty from policy discourse undermines NEP 2020's commitment to equity and inclusivity.

Objectives of the study

- To analyse the current status and challenges faced by guest faculty in Odisha's universities.
- To examine the potential impact of NEP 2020 on the role and responsibilities of guest faculty.
- To explore strategies for enhancing the integration and effectiveness of guest faculty within the new educational framework.
- To propose recommendations for policymakers and university administrators to better support and utilize guest faculty in achieving NEP 2020 objectives.

4. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively achieve its objectives. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to analyse the challenges and opportunities of guest faculty under NEP 2020 in Odisha's universities. The qualitative component includes in-depth interviews with guest faculty members from various universities to gather insights into their experiences, challenges, and perceptions regarding NEP 2020, as well as focus group discussions with university administrators and policymakers to understand institutional practices and policy responses. The quantitative component involves the use of structured questionnaires distributed among guest faculty to collect data on employment conditions, professional development opportunities, and perceptions of policy implementation. The collected data will be analysed using descriptive and thematic analysis methods to identify key trends, patterns, and implications for higher education policy reform in Odisha.

Who is Guest Faculty/Guest Lecturer?

In the Indian higher education system particularly in Odisha guest faculty or guest lecturers are temporary teaching professionals appointed by universities and colleges to fill vacant faculty positions. Unlike invited external experts who deliver occasional lectures, these educators often take on full academic responsibilities, including teaching, mentoring, and administrative work, but without the privileges or security of permanent staff.

Guest faculty are typically well-qualified many hold PhDs or have cleared UGC-NET and play a crucial role in maintaining

the continuity of teaching where permanent recruitment is lacking. However, their engagement is 'short-term, contractual, and poorly remunerated', making them vulnerable to administrative discretion and financial instability. Under the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes teacher quality, training, and institutional excellence, guest faculty remain a paradox. They embody the intellectual backbone of higher education in Odisha yet operate under conditions of precarity and limited recognition. Therefore, understanding who guest faculty are and how their contributions sustain universities is central to evaluating the inclusiveness and effectiveness of higher education reforms under NEP 2020.

Guest Faculty in Odisha: A Contextual Overview

Since the early 2000s, the Government of Odisha has increasingly relied on guest faculty to address shortages in universities and colleges. The system was initially seen as a temporary measure, but over time it has evolved into a permanent structural feature of higher education. The Odisha Higher Education Department's reports reveal that nearly 40–50% of teaching positions in state universities and government colleges are filled by guest or contractual staff, a trend that reflects both fiscal austerity and policy inertia.

Guest faculty in Odisha face several specific challenges:

- **Insecure Employment:** Their contracts are semester-based or yearly, with no assurance of renewal.
- **Low Remuneration:** Payments are often delayed, inadequate, and disproportionate to their workload.
- **Inferior Treatment:** Despite possessing higher academic qualifications (including PhDs), guest faculty often face disrespect from senior colleagues and administrators.
- **Exclusion from Academic Processes:** Many are excluded from decision-making, curriculum development, and research opportunities.
- **Psychological Stress:** The lack of job security and recognition fosters stress, anxiety, and demotivation, impacting both personal and professional life.

Yet, guest faculty are indispensable to Odisha's universities. They teach core courses, guide students, and in many cases, sustain departments that would otherwise collapse due to faculty shortages. The paradox of being simultaneously essential yet marginalised forms the crux of their professional identity.

5. Historical Background of Guest Faculty in India and Odisha + NEP 2020 and Higher Education Reform

Historical Evolution of Guest Faculty in India

The phenomenon of guest or contractual faculty in Indian higher education is not new. It can be traced to the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period marked by economic liberalization and growing enrolments in universities without corresponding expansion in permanent faculty positions. The National Policy on Education (1986, revised 1992) recognized the need for

quality teachers but failed to address systemic shortages, leading to reliance on temporary appointments. By the early 2000s, contractualization became a structural feature rather than a temporary measure. Universities and colleges across states increasingly appointed guest lecturers to address immediate teaching needs. The UGC (2003, 2010) issued guidelines for contractual teachers, but implementation varied widely across states. While some states introduced fixed honoraria, others continued to pay at extremely low rates, reinforcing disparities. The emergence of private universities further complicated the picture. These institutions, while projecting themselves as centres of excellence, also relied heavily on adjunct or visiting faculty. Consequently, the status of guest faculty became associated with precarity, lack of recognition, and dependence on institutional discretion.

Historical Background in Odisha

In Odisha, the issue of guest faculty gained momentum in the late 1990s and early 2000s. With rising student enrolments in state universities such as Utkal University, Sambalpur University, Berhampur University, and later Rama Devi Women's University, the demand for teachers far exceeded the sanctioned posts. Financial constraints prevented the Odisha government from creating new permanent faculty positions, leading to the appointment of guest lecturers. By 2010, guest faculty had become the backbone of many colleges under the Higher Education Department of Odisha. Reports suggest that in some institutions, guest lecturers constituted over 50% of the teaching staff (Das, 2020). These appointments were made annually, with honoraria ranging between ₹8,000 to ₹15,000 per month often delayed and lacking benefits such as provident fund, medical insurance, or housing allowances. The plight of guest faculty in Odisha attracted media attention. Articles in *The Samaja* (2015) and *Prameya* (2018) highlighted how guest lecturers worked under humiliating conditions, being treated as "second-class academics." Despite their qualifications many holding PhDs and clearing UGC-NET they remained marginalized in decision-making processes within their departments. The government occasionally attempted reforms, such as the Odisha State Higher Education Council's 2017 proposal to regularize posts, but these remained largely on paper due to financial limitations. As of 2025, thousands of guest faculty continue to function as essential yet undervalued contributors to the higher education system in Odisha.

NEP 2020 and Higher Education Reform

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents the most comprehensive reform in Indian education since independence. It emphasizes flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, research promotion, and global competitiveness. Among its key features for higher education are:

- **Teacher Quality and Development:** NEP 2020 stresses continuous professional development (CPD) and the creation of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) by 2022.
- **Institutional Restructuring:** It envisions fewer but larger multidisciplinary institutions, phasing out the current

system of affiliation and introducing degree-granting colleges.

- **Autonomy and Accountability:** Greater autonomy for universities is paired with stricter accountability mechanisms through the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).
- **Research and Innovation:** Establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund quality research and strengthen the research ecosystem.

While NEP 2020 emphasizes the centrality of teachers, it does not explicitly address the category of guest faculty. This omission raises critical concerns. On one hand, guest faculty could benefit from professional development programs, digital learning platforms, and new avenues for research collaboration. On the other hand, without policy clarity, universities may continue exploiting contractual faculty, intensifying the problem of precarity.

Implications for Odisha

For Odisha, the NEP 2020 presents both opportunities and challenges. Universities in the state, already heavily dependent on guest faculty, may find it difficult to implement the policy's vision of teacher excellence without addressing the conditions of temporary staff. Some specific implications include:

Opportunities:

- Guest faculty may gain access to digital teaching tools and CPD workshops under NEP's digital and training initiatives.
- A shift toward research-based education could provide avenues for academically motivated guest faculty to engage in publications and collaborations.

Challenges:

- Without structural reforms, NEP's vision of "qualified and motivated teachers" risks being unattainable in Odisha, where many lecturers live under financial and professional insecurity.
- The merger of smaller colleges into large multidisciplinary universities may reduce teaching slots, disproportionately affecting guest faculty.
- Increased emphasis on global competitiveness may marginalize underpaid staff, creating hierarchies between permanent faculty and guest lecturers.

Thus, while NEP 2020 signals a progressive step for Indian higher education, its success in Odisha depends significantly on how guest faculty issues are acknowledged and addressed.

Challenges Faced by Guest Faculty in Odisha (Post-NEP 2020)

While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a transformative restructuring of Indian higher education, the lived realities of guest faculty in Odisha reveal a deep contradiction between policy ideals and institutional practices. Guest faculty, who constitute a substantial proportion of teaching staff across Odisha's universities and autonomous colleges, face multiple layers of challenges ranging from

financial insecurity to institutional discrimination. This section provides a thematic analysis of these issues.

Financial Insecurity and Exploitation

The most pressing challenge for guest faculty in Odisha is financial precarity. Despite holding advanced degrees including NET, JRF, and PhDs many are paid on an hourly or lecture-based basis, with monthly remuneration rarely exceeding ₹15,000–20,000. Payment delays are common, sometimes stretching for months, leaving teachers unable to meet basic livelihood needs. In comparison, regular faculty members receive salaries several times higher for equivalent teaching and research workloads.

This economic disparity not only creates a sense of injustice but also undermines the morale and productivity of guest faculty, forcing many to take up additional part-time jobs to sustain themselves.

Lack of Job Security

Guest faculty appointments in Odisha are typically contractual and renewed on a semester or annual basis. There is no assurance of continuity, and appointments often depend on the discretion of university authorities. NEP 2020 speaks of creating an environment for attracting and retaining "the best talent" in higher education; however, in practice, guest faculty remain at the mercy of administrative decisions, with no pathway to permanency. This uncertainty discourages long-term academic planning and stifles the development of stable academic communities.

Professional Stagnation

Unlike their regular counterparts, guest faculty are rarely provided with opportunities for professional growth. Access to research funds, conference sponsorships, and international collaborations is often restricted. Even when eligible, guest faculty are excluded from applying for faculty development programs or research projects, thereby restricting their academic visibility. The absence of mentorship and systemic support further isolates them from contributing meaningfully to the research ecosystem envisioned under NEP 2020.

Inferior Treatment by Senior Faculty and Authorities

A recurring concern reported by guest faculty across Odisha is the lack of dignity and recognition within academic spaces. Despite their qualifications and contributions, they are often treated as "second-class" members of the faculty community. Senior professors and administrators may assign them excessive workloads without acknowledgment, deny them participation in decision-making processes, or exclude them from departmental meetings. Such discriminatory treatment fosters an environment of humiliation, eroding self-worth and academic identity.

Caste and Gender Dimensions

In Odisha, as in many parts of India, caste and gender dynamics intersect with the guest faculty experience. Individuals from marginalized castes or women scholars often face additional layers of prejudice. Instances of caste-based

stereotyping, allocation of menial duties, or dismissive attitudes toward women academics have been noted in informal faculty accounts. These systemic inequities run counter to the inclusivity envisioned by both the Indian Constitution and NEP 2020.

Authority and Bureaucratic Domination

Guest faculty are often at the receiving end of rigid administrative hierarchies. Decisions about workload, salary disbursement, or contract renewal are made unilaterally by authorities, leaving little scope for grievance redressal. The absence of institutional mechanisms to protect guest faculty rights allows for arbitrary exercise of power, reinforcing feelings of vulnerability and dependence.

Psychological Stress and Alienation

The combination of financial insecurity, lack of recognition, and institutional discrimination contributes to high levels of psychological stress among guest faculty. Many report feelings of alienation, self-doubt, and professional frustration. The precarious working conditions make it difficult for them to focus on academic creativity, leading to burnout and loss of enthusiasm. The NEP's vision of empowered, motivated teachers cannot materialize unless these structural barriers are addressed.

Lived Experiences of Guest Faculty: Field Insights from Odisha

The lived realities of guest faculty in Odisha reveal the deep contradictions between policy aspirations and institutional practices. Field-based conversations and informal interviews with guest lecturers across several state universities including Utkal University, Berhampur University, and Sambalpur University, Ravenshaw University highlight a shared experience of insecurity, neglect, and professional invisibility. Despite holding advanced qualifications such as Ph.D. and UGC-NET, most respondents reported earning between ₹15,000-25,000 to ₹35,000 per month, often with delayed disbursement. Payments are made either on a per-class basis or after several months, creating severe financial stress. A faculty member from a government degree college in Cuttack remarked, "We teach full courses, attend meetings, and guide students, yet we are treated as temporary outsiders. Sometimes, we don't even know if our contracts will be renewed next semester." This uncertainty discourages long-term commitment and affects their morale. Another guest lecturer from Berhampur University noted that while permanent staff attend national conferences and receive research grants, guest faculty are "not even informed about such opportunities." Beyond economic hardship, emotional and psychological strains are equally visible. Several lecturers shared that they experience humiliation or differential treatment in departmental spaces. A young woman faculty member mentioned that despite her doctoral degree, she is often assigned non-academic tasks such as invigilation or record keeping, adding, "It's as if our qualifications don't count until we become regular." These experiences point to an institutional culture where guest faculty remain essential yet excluded. Nevertheless, some respondents expressed cautious

optimism about the potential of NEP 2020. They welcomed the emphasis on digital learning, teacher training, and professional development programs, but doubted whether these opportunities would truly reach temporary staff. One participant summarized, "NEP sounds good on paper, but until policies guarantee stability and respect, our situation won't really change." These insights underscore that the challenges of guest faculty in Odisha are not merely administrative but structural, rooted in systemic inequities of recognition, remuneration, and representation. Their voices remind us that any reform in higher education must begin with ensuring dignity, fairness, and institutional inclusion for all educators.

Opportunities and Potential for Guest Faculty under NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, while not directly addressing the status of guest faculty, outlines several reforms that have the potential to transform their position in higher education. If properly implemented, these reforms could create opportunities for recognition, professional growth, and greater institutional inclusion for guest faculty in Odisha.

Emphasis on Faculty Development and Training

NEP 2020 stresses the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers. It envisions mandatory training programs, workshops, and pedagogical innovation platforms. Guest faculty, if included in such programs, could significantly enhance their teaching skills, gain exposure to new methodologies, and establish themselves as vital contributors to the knowledge economy. Access to CPD could also reduce the sense of marginalization by placing guest faculty within broader professional learning networks.

Pathways for Merit-Based Career Progression

One of the long-term goals of NEP 2020 is to attract and retain talented educators through transparent, merit-based systems of recruitment and advancement. If state governments and universities adopt inclusive policies, guest faculty could be provided with clear career pathways, moving from contractual roles to more permanent teaching positions. This would reduce the uncertainty they face and encourage sustained commitment to higher education.

Integration into Institutional Governance

NEP 2020 emphasizes decentralization and participatory governance within higher education institutions. By involving guest faculty in departmental meetings, academic councils, and curriculum committees, institutions can create a sense of belonging and collective responsibility. Such integration would not only enhance institutional efficiency but also recognize the valuable perspectives of guest faculty, who often carry heavy teaching loads.

Research Opportunities and Funding

The policy highlights the need to strengthen India's research ecosystem through the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF). Guest faculty, if allowed equal access to funding opportunities, could use these resources to publish, collaborate, and enhance their academic visibility. This would

mitigate the current sense of professional stagnation and give guest faculty in Odisha a platform to demonstrate their capabilities at national and international levels.

Digital Platforms and Open Resources

NEP 2020 encourages the use of digital platforms such as SWAYAM, DIKSHA, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Guest faculty can leverage these platforms to showcase their expertise, create educational content, and gain wider recognition beyond their home institutions. This opens avenues for building academic reputations independent of institutional limitations.

Inclusivity and Equity Provisions

At its core, NEP 2020 stresses equity and inclusivity in education. If implemented in spirit, this should extend to faculty as well ensuring fair treatment regardless of employment status, caste, or gender. Odisha, with its history of social inequalities, could particularly benefit from policies mandating equal respect and dignity for all educators, including guest faculty.

Recognition of Contribution in Teaching-Learning

NEP 2020 emphasizes outcome-based education and student-centric learning. Guest faculty, who often take on the bulk of undergraduate teaching, can play a crucial role in achieving these outcomes. With proper recognition of their teaching contributions, universities could begin to view guest faculty not as temporary stopgaps but as indispensable academic actors.

Possibility of State-Level Reforms in Odisha

States have considerable autonomy in implementing NEP 2020. Odisha could use this flexibility to pioneer reforms specifically for guest faculty for example, standardized honorarium scales, timely payment mechanisms, or conversion schemes that reward years of teaching service with eligibility for permanent posts. Such state-driven reforms could become a model for other regions in India.

Comparative Insights: Other Indian States & Experiences

1) Kerala: Standardized Honoraria & Pathways to Stability

Kerala has periodically revised minimum honoraria for guest lecturers at government colleges and issued clearer workload/payment norms. While not solving precarity fully, two features stand out:

- State-level uniform pay slabs (reducing inter-college disparity)
- Explicit inclusion of guest faculty in Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) and IQAC activities at many colleges.

What Odisha can adapt: state-wide uniform honoraria; mandatory inclusion in FDPs; transparent workload norms tied to timely digital payment.

2) Delhi University (DU) & Central Universities: High Reliance, Stronger Unionization

Large universities such as DU rely heavily on ad-hoc/guest teachers, but they also have visible teacher associations, frequent policy petitions, and transparent public recruitment cycles. The downsides short-term contracts and uncertainty persist, but procedural transparency and collective bargaining are comparatively stronger.

What Odisha can adapt: transparent recruitment calendars; online tracking of sanctioned/filled posts; grievance redressal cells with teacher representation

3) Punjab & Haryana: Litigation-Led Protections

In parts of the north, repeated litigation by ad-hoc/guest faculty has yielded court-enforced procedural safeguards (e.g., continuity across sessions, notice periods). Although piecemeal, judicial oversight has nudged universities toward predictability.

What Odisha can adapt: state guidelines guaranteeing minimum notice, mid-semester continuity, and appeal mechanisms to reduce arbitrary discontinuation.

4) Maharashtra: Contractual to Tenure-Track Experiments

Select institutions have piloted fixed-term contracts with clearer appraisal criteria (teaching-plus-research outputs), offering multi-year stability and a path to regular posts when sanctioned.

What Odisha can adapt: a 3–5 year fixed-term track with annual appraisals, research points, and conversion windows when vacancies open.

5) Tamil Nadu: Data & Finance-Linked Rationalization

Some state universities link faculty rationalization to enrolment and course loads, producing data-driven staffing and budgeting. It doesn't eliminate precarity, but it aligns posts with needs.

What Odisha can adapt: an Odisha-wide Faculty Needs Dashboard (sanctioned vs. working posts, GER by district, course loads) to justify regular recruitment and plan guest engagement fairly.

What Works Across Contexts (Actionable Lessons)

- Uniform State Policy: statewide honoraria, workload, and payment timelines.
- Multi-Year Contracts: shift from semesterly to 3–5-year fixed terms with benefits.
- Transparent Recruitment Calendars: public dashboards; digital offers; grievance cells.
- Career Pathways: teaching-track promotions; bridge-to-regular posts; points for years served.
- Inclusion in Governance: seats for guest faculty in Boards of Studies/IQAC.
- Guaranteed CPD & Research Access: earmarked FDP slots; NRF/ICSSR-style small grants for guest faculty.

- Quality-Linked Funding: NAAC/State incentives for institutions that meet guest-faculty dignity benchmarks

Policy Recommendations: Towards a Roadmap for Guest Faculty Reform in Odisha

Guest faculty form an indispensable part of higher education in Odisha, yet their contribution is often undervalued. In light of the NEP 2020 reforms and the state's aspiration to expand access to quality education, a more equitable and sustainable framework is urgently required. The following recommendations offer a roadmap for policy and institutional reform in Odisha:

Institutionalization of Guest Faculty Policy

- Odisha's Higher Education Department should adopt a comprehensive Guest Faculty Policy, codifying recruitment processes, workload, honorarium, and tenure security.
- Such a policy should be aligned with UGC guidelines and periodically reviewed in consultation with stakeholders, including guest faculty themselves.

Fair and Timely Remuneration

- Guest faculty in Odisha should be entitled to a minimum honorarium consistent with UGC pay norms and indexed to inflation.
- Honorarium disbursement must be timely and transparent, avoiding delays of several months that undermine livelihood security.

Professional Recognition and Dignity of Work

- Universities should issue formal institutional ID cards, email IDs, and inclusion in faculty directories for guest lecturers.
- They must be invited to participate in academic councils, departmental meetings, and training programs, thereby ensuring respect and dignity in academic spaces.

Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment

- Recruitment processes must be conducted through open advertisements and clear merit-based evaluation criteria, avoiding arbitrary or politically influenced appointments.
- Guest faculty who has served for multiple consecutive years should be given preference in regular appointments or converted into a "contractual permanent" category.

Opportunities for Academic Growth

- Guest faculty must be given access to research grants, conference leave, and faculty development programs to sustain academic excellence.
- A provision for mentorship under senior faculty can promote professional growth and reduce alienation.

Workload Rationalization

- The workload assigned to guest faculty should be equitable and clearly defined, preventing exploitation through excessive hours with inadequate compensation.
- A monitoring mechanism can ensure uniformity across institutions.

Integration with NEP 2020 Vision

- NEP 2020 envisions multidisciplinary, inclusive, and equitable higher education. Odisha can leverage this moment by ensuring guest faculty are treated as partners in reform, not as temporary stop-gaps.
- Guest faculty may be employed in skill-based, vocational, and multidisciplinary teaching modules, which are central to NEP 2020.

Establishment of a Grievance Redressal Mechanism

- A state-level grievance redressal cell should be set up specifically for guest and contractual faculty, with representation from universities, faculty associations, and government officials.
- This will address issues of harassment, discrimination, and unfair treatment within institutions.

6. Conclusion

Guest faculty in Odisha's universities are indispensable to sustaining higher education, yet they continue to face systemic marginalization through low remuneration, job insecurity, and lack of institutional recognition. Although the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions inclusivity, quality enhancement, and teacher empowerment, it fails to directly address the precarious conditions of temporary educators. For Odisha, realizing the true spirit of NEP 2020 requires concrete measures fair compensation, transparent recruitment processes, professional development opportunities, and inclusion of guest faculty in academic decision-making. Strengthening their position will not only ensure justice and dignity for these educators but also enhance the overall quality, equity, and sustainability of the higher education system.

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