

ISSUES IN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION :

An education system is a dynamic system. And the faculty plays an important role in realising the dynamic stability in any education system. Faculty can be defined as the congregation of personnel in education institution who take part in pedagogical processes.

Core function of an institution is to develop need based and useful pedagogical processes and any other function has to be an activity to support the process of assimilation and dissipation of knowledge.

The success of an institution depends on the capabilities of faculty to cope with the changing need of the user system.

One of the prime inputs to the education system is the manpower inputs in the form of faculty. The quality of faculty decides the quality of the institution. This is more relevant especially in the newly started self financed engineering colleges (SFEC), as they have to stand in competition with existing established colleges.

However most of these SFEC's find it difficult to recruit suitable experienced faculty. The problem is more serious in the colleges situated in the semi-urban and rural areas. As such the college has to recruit faculty whatever is available.

The problem will continue for a long time to come and therefore the SFEC's have to launch a long term programme of

faculty development around the persons already recruited or to be recruited in future.

This paper is intended to raise certain issues with regard to faculty development in general in Under - Graduate Engineering Colleges.

2. BASIC QUESTIONS

An individual to become a lecturer in a college has to undergo academic training for about 17 years starting from Primary Education to Post Graduate Education. The average age of a new lecturer may be about 25 years. He will serve an education institution as a faculty for about three decades or more. The period of the individual being a teacher is almost double that of the 17 years, necessary to acquire the minimum value for an individual to become a lecturer. If we extrapolate further, the obvious question would be that, will the value attached to the competency of the individual increase in the same proportion so that the individual may be worth something as a competent manpower at the time of his / her retirement? If the system of education or an engineering college is such that the value of the competence of a faculty increases consistently throughout the period of his / her stay in the system, the occupational mobility or the retirement should not be a problem at all. In reality, this is not the case. Obviously, there is a need for introspection with respect to institutional management and faculty development.

Generally the teacher in a college does not have a freedom to participate in decision - making with respect to administration. A handful of senior people in hierarchy are sometimes exceptions to this. In fact, a handful of people at the top of hierarchy feel that the college belongs to them and others are to obey them blindly. In other wards, participative democratic strategies in educational process are very rare. Even with respect to teaching in a classroom, the teacher does not have, in the real sense, freedom of decision-making with respect to the course content, books for reference, and the assessment of students, because the examination question papers dictate the terms of teaching in the classroom. Evaluation has to be a measure of assimilation of knowledge; on the contrary the classroom teaching has been reduced to make the students pass in the examination. Curricula are not generally need based which is a complaint the user system has about the engineering education system. Hence the question would be that what is the extent of freedom a teacher enjoy with regard to decision making in the pedagogical processes? There is no job description for teacher in an Engineering College. Hence it is not possible for a teacher to plan his performance. Duties and responsibilities are not spelt out in measurable terms and therefore there has not been any structured performance - appraisal - methodology with regard to performance of the teacher and in fact, of the institution as a whole itself. As a result, the teacher who does not perform at all, may complete a blemishless, successful career and on the other hand a teacher who performs out of internal compulsion is not properly rewarded. Many a time, and more over, a performer is likely to commit mistakes because he performs and therefore, very often, he may be amenable for punishment. Also, there is identity crisis in the system, and incentives generally do not have bearing on the performance.

The obvious reasons for all this are that institutional objectives are not spelt out, instructional objectives and need based curricula are not followed and scientific management principles are not applied in the institution's management.

3.0 Faculty Development

Effective imparting depends on infra-structure, students and faculty, provided faculty has the attributes namely an efficient teacher, administrator, motivator, guide or counsellor, person with creative attitude, information broker, impartial evaluator, leader, communicator and a good human being. The system of education has failed to perform well because there has not been any committed approach towards faculty development in equipping the faculty with the above attributes.

On the training needs for faculty generally faculty development is done by deputing the faculty for Ph.D and Post Graduate Programmes under quality improvement programme. Also faculty are deputed to attend short term courses on specific topics conducted in various centres. This is only a part of the faculty development. Faculty have to perform in the institution where they are employed and they have to evolve strategies for performance depending upon the priorities of the institution. Therefore, faculty development becomes institution specific. The institution should have holistic view with respect to institutional development while developing the faculty. Thus institution has to be very clear about its future course and accordingly has to evolve integrated faculty development programme which will cater to the total performance of the institution.

If we see from the point of the institution, institution has to worry about resource generation, infra-structure development, marketability of outputs of the

institution, maintenance, pedagogical processes, student management, personnel management, organisational behavior, inventory control etc. The personnel of the institution have to be developed with an integrated approach to cater to all these functional dimensions.

If the faculty in an institution is divided into three categories with respect to service experience, the faculty have, namely people with experience 0-10, 10-20 and 20 years and above, the faculty in the first category share the major teaching work load and they should be groomed into good teachers; the teachers in the second category support the institutional administration and management and therefore these teachers are to be trained with regard to management and administrative capabilities; and the teachers in the third category take part in the administration and their role is very important in the institution's performance. The teachers in second and third category are to be trained in leadership, personnel management, cost consciousness and so on.

An Engineering college as a productive system is very much different from a college for general education. The outputs from Engineering College as detailed earlier are multi-dimensional. The financial resource input and the expertise input to realise these outputs are to be generated in a professional way, which is possible if the

faculty, the intelligent material in the system, are developed with an integrated professional approach. On the other hand it is important to look after the welfare of the faculty in order to make them work for the institution with dedication. This also constitutes a part of the faculty development.

4.0 Summary :

Following are essential for the total institutional development with a special emphasis on the faculty development for all Engineering Institutes, particularly for SFEL's as they enjoy, more freedom and have more administrative flexibility for implementing any scheme.

- 4.1 Institutional objectives become a necessity
Perspective plan for a specified period is essential
- 4.2 Design of the structured faculty development programmes
-Identification of Training needs
Development of infrastructure to realise institutional objectives
- 4.3 Integrated Faculty Development
Integrated Institutional performance
- 4.4 An institution should be regarded as productive system with due emphasis on the welfare of the faculty who form the fulcrum of the system
Application of objective based scientific management principles

