Maintaining Teacher Quality in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

'Teacher quality' is a composite term to indicate the quality of teachers in terms of explicit qualification of the faculty and implicit teacher characteristics such as ability, commitment, motivation supported by the adequacy of hiring procedures, faculty availability, professional development and recognition of teaching abilities. Teachers take initiative to learn and keep abreast of the latest developments, innovate, continuously seek improvement in their work and strive for individual and institutional excellence. This paper aims to outline the education service model developed by Srinivas Institute of Management studies (SIMS) for maintaining teacher quality. Backed by the presumption that knowledge is power and information is fundamental to knowledge building and knowledge sharing, the college aims to provide quality education to its students for improved academic performance. By providing under graduate and post graduate education in Business Management, Computer Applications and Social Work, the college has been providing education service in major areas of importance to the society. In this paper, we have analysed the strategies followed by Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, Mangalore in planning and management of its human resource to meet the changing requirements of the curriculum, student, and learning and challenges of time and strategies adopted by the institution in enhancing the teacher quality.

Keywords : Teacher quality in higher education institution, Quality in higher education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Quality is of paramount importance in any institution of higher learning. 'Teacher quality' is a composite term to indicate the quality of teachers in terms of explicit qualification of the faculty and implicit teacher characteristics such as ability, commitment, motivation supported by the adequacy of hiring procedures, faculty availability, professional development and recognition of teaching abilities [1-2]. Teachers take initiative to learn and keep abreast of the latest developments, to innovate, continuously seek improvement in their work and strive for individual and institutional excellence. [3-7]. Teacher quality has a direct relation to learning outcome to the extent that it is a major determinant of the overall quality index of the institution. From hiring to nurturing, sustaining and harvesting, adopting right practices and employing appropriate strategies is vested with the institution. Capacity development is an ongoing process where growth is the output and serves as the input for further growth. Teacher quality influences curriculum- its formulation, implementation and modification – enhances potential for research, consultancy and extension, makes best use of infrastructure and learning resources, contributes to student support and progression, provides leadership and good governance, all resulting in

innovations and best practices. Various studies on innovations and quality in higher education including Strategic Planning in Higher Education Institutions [3], Innovations and Best Practices can Transform Higher Education Institutions [4], quality in higher education [5-6], Internal Quality Assurance Cell and its Contribution [7], Enhancement of Graduate attributes in Higher Education Institutions through Stage Models [8], Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions [9], Effective Leadership and Governance [10], Strategy Development and Deployment in Higher Education Institutions [11], Faculty Empowerment Strategies in Higher Education Institutions [12], Unique & Successful Model in Integrated Development [13], Applying SWOC Analysis to an Institution of Higher Education [14], Techniques for Electric Energy Auditing in Education System [15], Societal Expectation And Institutional Accountability in Higher Education [16], Methods and Approaches for Employability Skill Generation in Higher Educational Institutions [17], Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Institutions through Best Practices in Library [18], Analysis of Academic Administrative System Implemented in Higher educational institution [19], Learning through Team Centric Exercise & Key Point Pedagogy - An effective Learning Model for Slow Learners in Higher Education Training [20], Opportunities and Challenges for Private Universities [21], Innovations in Private Universities [22], Creating Innovators through setting up organizational Vision, Mission and Core Values : a Strategic Model in Higher Education [23], Comparative Study on MBA Programmes in Private & Public Universities [24], Impact of On-line Education on Higher Education System [25], Innovations in Higher Education - A new model implemented in MCA degree programme [26], Environmental Consciousness in Higher Educational Institutions [27], Analysis of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education [28], Innovations in Student Centric Learning – A Study of Top Business Schools [29], Innovations in Experimental Learning – A Study of World Top Business Schools [30], How to Increase Research Productivity in Higher Educational Institutions [31], Academic Support through Information System [32], and Quality Teaching and Learning as Practice Within Different Disciplinary Discourses [33], Innovative Education Model to realize Ideal Education System [34], ABCD analysis of Stage Model in Higher Education [35],) Analysis of NAAC Accreditation System using ABCD framework [36], Application of ABCD Analysis Framework on Private University System [37], The Study of New National Institutional Ranking System using ABCD Framework [38], and Quality Teaching and Learning as Practice Within Different Disciplinary Discourses [39] are studied and published.

About SIMS :

Srinivas Institute of Management Studies (SIMS) is established with the vision of imparting quality education and expanding opportunities to all the aspirants and across all realms of knowledge. It envisages to become a centre of excellence to serve as change agent in the society by generating a pool of human resources trained in science and technology, management and social service. The college offers master degree programmes in Business Management and Computer Science and Social work, and Bachelor degree in Commerce, Management and computer science. The curriculum delivery for these courses are effectively carried out by resorting to action planning by means of academic calendar, teaching plan, teachers diary and study material. The institute offers orientation programmes, guest lectures, study tours, video lectures, field practicums, NGO internship, industrial exposures, student exchange programmes and international educational visits also as supplements to the curriculum. It supports research based learning, exposure based learning, experiential learning, event management learning, field work based learning and laboratory based learning. Value addition is incorporated in teaching

through adding extra sessions over and above the prescribed syllabus for insight development. Opportunity is provided in the curriculum delivery to promote scientific thinking, spirit of questioning, expression of creative ideas, experimentation and learning by doing [8-12].

Faculty development programmes are periodically conducted. Consultancy and research are encouraged. Institution takes efforts in attracting eminent persons to visit the campus and interact with teachers and students. Most of the faculties have either secured Ph.D. or pursuing research leading to Ph.D. The institution strives to address cross cutting issues such as environment, gender etc. through conducting programmes related to the theme. Industry – institution – community interactions are maintained through village adoption, organizing job fairs, and short duration NGO internship which involve all students. Alumni are invited as distinguished guests to chair programmes. An Alumni association has been constituted for networking, relating to placement assistance, admissions etc. College magazine, news letter and e-magazines bring out creative talent among students. The administration of the institute is decentralized. The institute maintains high academic results. Placement cell provides career guidance to prepare the students for placements. All this and more, introduction of innovations and best practices have resulted in substantial increase in the standard of the institute to the merit requirement of the accreditation agency NAAC A grade. During these 14 years of its efforts of preparing young men and women for challenges in life, Srinivas Institute of Management Studies sincerely tried to impart comprehensive knowledge or **Samagra Jnana** and actual experience of the perfection or **Vijnana** to its students [13-17].

In this paper, we have analysed the strategies followed by Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, Mangalore in planning and management of its human resource to meet the changing requirements of the curriculum, institutional effort to cope with the growing demand/ scarcity of qualified senior faculty to teach new programmes/ modern areas of study being introduced, details of staff development programmes and the strategies adopted by the institution in enhancing the teacher quality, details on the policies/systems in place to recharge the teachers. It also include the institutional culture and environment that contributed to such performance/achievement of the faculty, the institutional system on evaluation of teachers by the students and external peers and its usage for improving the quality of the teaching-learning process [18-33].

II. RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The practice adopted by the institution for planning and management of its human resource is carried out in the following stages :

(1) Identification and Announcement of Vacancy :
Whenever there is a expansion of the existing course, introduction of new courses, or requirement for replacement, the college assess the knowledge, subject skill, qualification, specialization and experience required for the potential vacancy to be filled.
Accordingly publicity is given through media, browse the database created throughout the year, and look for references.

(2) Obtaining Applications :
Aspirants to the vacancy will submit the applications along with their resume to the college for consideration.

(3) Sorting & Short listing :
The applications obtained are processed through sorting and short listing.

(4) Scrutiny for suitability :
This is done particularly to maintain gender balance and matching the area of specialization.

(5) Intimation to the candidates :
Short listed candidates are intimated to attend a preliminary round of discussion with the faculty selection committee at the college.

(6) Preliminary Interviews & Discussions :
This will be held in the chamber of the head of the institute along with HOD of all the departments.

(7) Class Demonstration :
A live demonstration of the class is mandatory for candidates found satisfactory based on preliminary interviews and discussions. Opinion of the students is also sought.

(8) Verification of credentials :
Credentials of successful candidates are verified before the final interview.

(9) Interview :
The round table interview is conducted by members of the institutes management and terms of employment are conveyed and suitability is ascertained.

(10) References :
Verification of conduct, character, previous employment and qualifications are done through references provided by the candidate.

(11) Selection & Induction :
The finally selected candidate is inducted into the new work place and acquainted with the systems and the facilities of the college and gradually absorbed into schedule of work.

The following ways are adopted as retention strategies to maintain the faculty:

- In-house faculty development programme and training programme are organized from time to time to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the faculty to meet the changing requirements of the curriculum.
- The management conducts a yearly felicitation programme and honors the faculty and non teaching staff members for the outstanding achievements during the year.
- The management felicitates faculty members who complete their Ph.D. or any other higher degrees during each year.
- The institute provides equal opportunity to all the faculty members to grow with the institute and it provides good professional growth and development opportunities in terms of job enrichment, change in responsibilities, increments and promotions.
- A congenial organizational environment is enforced by the Head of the institution in order to maintain a healthy colleagueship and comradeship.
- Academic flexibility and professional freedom is given to all the faculty members which help them to creatively deliver the curriculum.

The institution has a policy to fill vacant teaching positions in reasonable time. The institution also adheres to UGC/ State Govt. norms for faculty recruitment and promotion.

Educational Supplements :

(1) Encouraging existing Faculty members : The institution encourages its Faculty members to acquire competency in new areas through pursuing other courses in distance mode/online.

(2) Providing NPTEL Resources : The institute provides NPTEL Lectures in emerging areas of science, technology and social science in video, audio and text format in the form of E-Resources in Library. Faculty and students are using these resources. The institute has received appreciation certificate from NPTEL for utilization of these resources.

(3) Utilizing Staff from sister Institutions : The Group owns and manages 16 Colleges which has experts in all areas of the courses offered by the college. Whenever required, the institution

utilizes them as resources to supplement the competency of the existing staff.

(4) Identifying visiting faculty : The institute has already identified a team of high profile visiting faculty, both from India and Abroad.

(5) Conducting FDP programmes in Emerging Areas : FDP programmes are a regular feature of the Staff Development Programmes of the college.

(6) Sponsoring Faculty to gain expertise : The faculty members are encouraged to attend sponsored programmes in B schools, Universities, and other institutions for exposure.

(7) Inviting Alumni of the Institution : This is a new practice adopted by the institution where some of the identified alumni serve as resource persons in sharing their experience on the job where latest technology/management practices are utilized.

(8) Institutional Specialization in Information Technology & Technology Management :
The courses relevant to IT are among those offered by the institute and the institution has built competency in Information Technology over years. The faculty as well as the students of other courses is benefitted by the internal resource.

III. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Faculty Training programmes are organized by the institution to empower and enable the use of various tools and technology for improved teaching-learning in various areas :

(a) Teaching learning methods/approaches :
The tools and techniques used for improved teaching-learning methods/approaches are as follows :

(1) Teaching Plan serves as a tool for student centric teaching. The pace of teaching is synchronized with the capacity of the learners and the time in hand through effective utilization of teaching plan.

(2) Study Material developed according to the syllabus provides comprehensive information in easy understandable manner for the students.

(3) Tutorials provides individual attention to slow learners who otherwise find inability to cope with the better performers in the class.

(4) Topic-based assignments to be worked and presented by the students, ensure student responsibility in learning process and adherence to time schedules.

(5) Progress Reports of the attendance provide caution to alert the students on punctuality to the classes. Progress reports on studies are conveyed to the students as well as their parents which help to monitor and ensure study performance.

(6) Case Analysis, Role play, Business games and simulations offer interesting ways of methods/approaches.

(7) Use of Library and information through Internet is also utilized for improved teaching - learning.

(8) The faculty members acquire competence in technology based data analysis through use of SPSS etc. learned through FDP programmes contributes to improved teaching.

(9) Faculty training programmes conducted in the institution to train the faculty in counselling serve to improve their capacity to handle students problems arising out of stress, neglect, loneliness and domestic difficulties.

(b) Handling new curriculum :
New curriculum becomes necessary for a faculty mainly on two occasions : When there is a revision of the curriculum by the University or When a New Subject is chosen to be taught afresh at the beginning of a particular year/semester.

(1) Whenever a new Curriculum is introduced by the University, a Faculty Training Programme is organized by the institution in which details on inclusion, exclusion, weightage of each topic in the unit, relevant references, approaches and methods, pattern of question papers, knowledge background etc. are discussed.

(2) Individual faculty are required to make summary presentation on curriculum in the ensuing faculty training programmes. Such discussions are scheduled to be conducted periodically in phased manner.

(3) The concerned faculty members are required to prepare teaching plan session wise and to develop study material as per the new curriculum.

(4) Whenever an existing faculty takes over a new curriculum in a particular semester or year, a discussion is generated in the training programme by the senior faculty and the faculty members who have handled that subject previously. The depth and framework form the subject matter of the discussion.

(c) Content/knowledge management :

Through Faculty Training Programmes, Faculty members will identify, acquire and transform the information in to knowledge. Identification of relevant information according to the curriculum is done through discussion in the training programme. This would include sources such as books, periodicals, journals, video clippings, databases etc. These information are acquired suitably to prepare teaching plan and study materials and transformed in the form of lectures, PPT presentations, and other methods etc.

(d) Selection, development and use of enrichment materials :

Faculty training programme will also provide a spectrum of supplementary materials which serves to be used as enrichment materials. Such for example are Open Source Courseware, NPTEL Lectures, Freely downloadable books from internet and other reference materials. The competency to dovetail such materials is acquired through the training programmes.

(e) Assessment :

The faculty training programmes help the faculty in the assessment of the students in the following ways :

(1) Marks secured in the internal examinations

(2) Regularity in attending classes.

(3) Punctuality in submitting assignments.

(4) Classroom discipline.

(5) Participative learning

(6) Interest and participation in co-curricular activities.

(7) Subject based viva-voce

(8) Flair in report writing

(9) Effective presentation

(10) Inter-personal relations and good habits.

(f) Cross cutting issues :

Cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, climate change etc. are discussed in the Faculty training programme due to their significance in the present context for human subsistence and survival. Subject experts in this area are brought in to deliver speeches on relevant topics concerning the above.

(g) Audio Visual Aids/multimedia :

Faculty training programme also contain certain sessions on usage of audio-visuals and multimedia. Live demonstrations are performed by the trainers who take care of such systems in the college.

(h) Teaching learning material development, selection and use :

As mentioned earlier, through the training/induction programmes, faculty members develop the skill to develop and use teaching learning materials such as session wise teaching plan, study materials according to the syllabus, question bank and the business cases as well as PPT presentations to be discussed in the class.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES TOWARDS TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

(1) Providing Opportunity to faculty to teach new Subjects :

Teachers are encouraged to teach new subjects every year so that they enjoy the freedom of choosing the liked subjects and avoid monotony in teaching same subject continuously for many years. This also helps in enhancing their knowledge capacities and makes them competent.

(2) Providing support for technology based information collection :

Based on various trainings provided by the college to acquire new knowledge through technology based information collection, obsolete methods/techniques of faculty members are replaced.

(3) Recharge through incorporation of Value added Chapter in each subject :

All teachers are required to choose & teach a few sessions of value added chapter beyond in each subject both in UG and PG programmes. This helps to enrich their job by identifying new developments in the subject.

(4) Contribute to innovative teaching Practices :

Teachers are encouraged to bring in creativity and innovation in teaching practices. Such for example, are entry test and summarizing the class by students at the end of the class, new and relevant business cases, business games etc. aimed at increased participation of students. The faculty are encouraged to demonstrate creativity and innovation in teaching.

(5) Take lead in curriculum development :

Providing opportunity to participating in curriculum development serves to recharge the teachers.

(6) Device and deliver Certificate courses :

Through Certificate programmes designed to meet the latest trends in the industry, teachers get opportunity to choose, learn and deliver subjects of their choice.

(7) Research Centre In charge :

The College has identified emerging areas for promoting research in the form of Research Centres as mentioned in the college website and expertise of the faculty is utilized in the capacity of research centre Head to pursue research in the relevant area. Status report and working papers are periodically prepared.

(8) Study Leave :

College has a policy to grant study leave for pursuing Ph.D. research on full time. Such instances already exist.

(9) Support for Research :

The College persuades all its faculty to earn research degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. Almost all have acquired M.Phil. and are doing Ph.D. on part-time.

(10) Research Grants :

The College promotes the efforts of the faculty to obtain funded projects and research grants from appropriate agencies such as UGC, DST, AICTE, ICSSR etc. The college also has a policy to provide seed money for research, based on requirement.

(11) Teaching Experience in other National Institutions/ specialized Programmes :
The college prefers to appoint experienced teachers who are qualified from National Institutions based on availability. The college also encourages its teachers to gain exposure by participating in various programmes held in National Institutions like IIMs, IITs, NITK etc. The college also sent some of its faculty members to international institutions like Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Studies, Grimsby, U.K. and University of Singapore.

(12) Industrial Engagement :
The college has appointed many teachers who have experience in industry/related fields.

(13) Consultancy Services :
The college also promotes consultancy services to be taken up by the teachers so that they gain experience without being away from the job.

V. FEEDBACK AND SELF EVALUATION

Comprehensive performance management system follows 360 degree appraisal. The institutional system of evaluation of teachers by the students and external peers and its usage for improving the quality of the teaching-learning process include various parameters like *(i) Regularity in conducting classes, (ii) Time -consciousness, (iii) Preparation for the Classes, (iv) Syllabus completion in time, (v) Competency in the subject concerned, (vi) Presentation skill (Voice, Language, Clarity), (vii) Methodology in Teaching, (viii) Interaction with the students, (xi) Accessibility to the students outside the class, (x) Quality & understandability of Study Materials etc.,* related to quality of teaching - learning process. The feedback grade points of all faculty members are worked out and conveyed as a feedback to individual teachers. Based on the feedback as a guideline, the faculty members set new approaches and methods to improve the quality of teaching -learning process. The external peers have an opportunity to give their feedback in the form of suggestions through the suggestion box kept in the college. The Institution has a mechanism of self evaluation of teachers to identify their involvement and contribution to various activities related to teaching, learning and research. The motivation for improved performance is incorporated into the reward system.

VI. CONCLUSION

Maintaining teacher quality is a major challenge for higher educational institutions. The institutions philosophy and policy towards teacher development is a major determinant of its success. SIMS adopts a three pronged strategy in enhancing and maintaining quality superiority. They are Recruitment and Retention, Training and Capacity Building and Feedback and Self-Evaluation followed by improvement and change. Innovative practices can flourish if organizational climate is conducive to learning. Side by side with quality enhancement measures a comprehensive performance management system matching self evaluation with institutional feedback, peer feedback and student feedback will go a long way in maintain teacher quality. Teacher quality influences curriculum- its formulation, implementation and modification – enhances potential for research, consultancy and extension, makes best use of infrastructure and learning resources, contributes to student support and progression, provides leadership and good governance, all resulting in innovations and best practices. Higher educational institutions cannot dispense with teacher quality.

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