

HRM AND HIGHER TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA CURRENT REALITIES

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ABSTRACT:

Before delving upon the Technical Education (TE) in Indian context, it is good to have a brief understanding of HE in general, as TE is one of its core constituents. We are aware that the role of HE towards a country's development significantly depends upon the quality that it contributes. Tilak (2012) opines that in India the public policy focus is more on sustaining primary education than on higher education; 12 rather he argues that there is a strong tendency to neglect higher education. To illustrate this, the author puts forth the notion of neo-liberal reforms in HE that culminated in the drastic reduction of public expenditure in the HE sector. To justify this he views that the resource allocation in HE had reached all time lows in the 8th and 9th Five Year Plans (FYP). Besides drastic decline and steep cuts in budget allocation for libraries, laboratories, research and alike, the author finds faculty improvement programmes also took a back seat as a consequent of this scenario.

Keywords: Higher Technical Education, Present and Future Prospects, HRM

Introduction

As a resultant effect, the author finds faculty recruitment in universities and colleges came to a halt for more than a decade. As the focus of this research is on faculty, this chapter takes inkling from Tilak's review on HE policy in general by taking a lead from the issues that he has pointed out. It is in this context the researcher tends to study the significance of knowledge society by understanding various initiatives being followed for strengthening the higher education institutions, viz. Human resources management. Given that HR in universities as an essential component for the sustenance of institutions on par with established global standards, the traditional and conservative methods of managing the human resources (faculty, staff and students) will no longer help us to achieve high performance and global excellence among teachers and students. Within the context of 11th FYP there has been a significant increase in the amount of higher education organizations to meet the ever growing societal demands pertaining to accessibility. With respect to technical education

institutions, a total of 7 IITs, 20 NITs, 4 IIITs, 2000 engineering and technical colleges, 1300 polytechnic colleges and many other institutions of excellence were set up. Notably, Tilak observes that faculty recruitment which had lagged for almost a decade and a half resumed in many Indian states. With increasing number of innovative institutions occupying the policy focus, such as, 'meta universities' there is also a felt need to improve the governance of existing HEIs. According to Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), 'Meta Universities' represents Second Generation Universities, free from physical boundary conditions and able to operate in virtual space, taking benefit of the flexibility and innovation possible in such domain. Subsequently, the issue of governance was highlighted by Prof. Yashpal Committee in his Report (Pal, 2009) which aimed to streamline the organization responsible for 13 managing HEIs. In this regard, one of the contentious recommendations is to have a single regulatory body, that is, National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER) which would serve as a common framework to simplify accreditation and improve bureaucratic responsiveness thereby promoting autonomy and institutional accountability. However, this is still pending as a legislative bill on the pretext that it would subsume institutions such as UGC, AICTE and NCTE etc.

STRUCTURE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

The technical education system in India has acquired a three tiered structure; certificate and diploma, degree and Post graduate levels. At the Certificate level the Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) gives training in vocation, craft or trade to develop skilled workers. It is offered after ten years of schooling. At the Diploma level the courses are offered after Secondary Schooling Leaving Certificate (S.S.L.C) or after completion of ITI. Diploma holders generally function at the supervisory level in Industry. They are also eligible for direct entry into the second year of the degree programme in Engineering. The bachelors' degree level programmes are offered after 12 years of Schooling. These graduates function as engineers responsible for planning, designing, production and management. The bachelors' degree leads to the fourth tier of the TE system that is the two year Post graduate programme followed by the research degree. The research degree requires about 3 - 5 years for completion after which they are eligible for scientific and research positions.

EMERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES

The emergence of universities in India was the result of the 'Woods Despatch' in 1854 which led to the passing of the 'Universities Act of 1857' followed by establishment of Universities at the Presidency towns of Madras, Bombay and 14 Calcutta. Later the Indian Universities (Degrees) Act of 1860 empowered the Universities to confer diplomas and degrees. (Biswas and Agrawal, 1986).

ESTABLISHMENT OF ENGINEERING COLLEGES

Engineering colleges were established in the nineteenth century to meet the growing needs of locally trained higher level technical personnel. The first engineering college

was established in 1847 at Roorkee. Even though it was not affiliated to any university it gave diplomas considered to be equivalent to degrees. In 1948, the Roorkee University Act was agreed and in 1949, the status of this college was further enhanced and Roorkee Engineering College became the first Technical University of India. After completion of 150th year of reality, the Institute has been given the category of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in 2003. In 1856 the college of civil engineering was started at Calcutta. Later in accordance with the government policy, three engineering colleges were opened by about 1856 in the three Presidencies. The survey school of Guindy was upgraded in the year 1862 by adding a collegiate department and in 1864 a civil Engineering College was opened in Poona (Singh and Sudarshan, 1996). The year 1880, was a landmark as all of these colleges started offering degree level courses. In the Madras Presidency, the industrial school connected to the gun carriage factory in due course became the College of Engineering Guindy and was affiliated to the Madras University in 1858.

DEEMED UNIVERSITIES

"Deemed-to-be-University" or Deemed university is a grade of self-sufficiency approved by the Department of Higher Education in the Union Human Resource Development Ministry, on the advice of the UGC, under Section 3 of UGC Act, 1956. The grade permits full independence in syllabus, courses, fees and admissions. Indeed, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) was the first organization in India to be approved deemed-to-be-university grade way back in May 12th, 1958. Many private colleges especially the engineering colleges have gained the deemed university status. As of now there are about 120 deemed-to-be-universities in India.

MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

At the Central level the Bureau of Technical Education (BTE, under MHRD) takes care of monitoring and evaluation of centrally funded institutions. It processes the proposals of new plan schemes and assistance through foreign agencies. University Grants Commission (UGC) is an apex body for funding central universities and maintenance of standards for teaching and research in universities. All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), a constitutional body from 1987 awards approval for opening new technological organizations, beginning of new programs and for difference in intake capacity in technical education. It also maintains norms and standards through its agency the National Bureau of Accreditation (NBA). The Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE), an agency of MHRD organizes conferences, workshops and training programs for technical faculty of polytechnic and engineering colleges. At the State level there is a Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) for effective administration of technical education in the state. Each state has a State Board of Technical Education (SBTE) for controlling and giving directions at the diploma level. However state level colleges are affiliated to state universities that have academic control of these colleges for curriculum, examinations and awards of degrees and diplomas.

PRESENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Engineering education has undergone many changes and challenges over the years. In India, the role of engineering educators have changed a lot which had been reflected in the National Policy on Education, 1986 on their view on technical and management education that the engineering educators will have multiple roles to play – like research, development of learning resource material, teaching, managing and extension the Institution. Global competence, transnational mobility, linking education with practice and research are very crucial for the future engineering work force as recommended by Global Study on Engineering Excellence (Biswas et. al., 2010). As quality engineers are the byproducts of quality engineering education and quality teachers, it is the human resources of today's university which should be trained and developed to meet the demands of engineering education. Eventually, in the process of revamping higher education, although wide array of initiatives are adopted across HEIs, this thesis intends to understand the emerging strategic exercises in faculty management from HR perspective viz. Recruitment, Development, Appraisal and Compensation practices. As the expectations continue to grow upon the faculty members to deliver competent roles and responsibilities, concurrently, there lies a concrete reason to reflect on evolving a comprehensive HR policy. Efforts to maintain and enrich faculty work mainly in a varying framework are indeed significantly essential to teaching members, higher education and organizational leaders all over the world (Gillespie & Robertson, 2010). In acknowledging the urgent need to manage Higher Education Institutions in a professional manner, Mittal (2007) in his article had put forth the idea of creating HR departments within universities. In fact, he emphasises that management of HEIs can no longer be dealt in isolation as done in the past, rather appropriate HR strategy needs to be in place for the overall performance of HEIs.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Even though HRM have been consistently documented in the business environment, however, sufficient literature is not available in the context of professionally managing academic faculty especially with regard to Indian university setting. Academic faculty being the pivot of an institution, HRM practices in governing the academic faculty plays a key role in determining the quality of the institution. Literature review shows that not a single HRM practice but 'bundles' of HRM practices combine to contribute to attracting, developing, performing, rewarding and retaining the faculty members. Thus they contribute to the overall job satisfaction and high performance of the academic faculty. Therefore, this present research aims to study the human resource practices in technological institutions, with special reference to their pattern of hiring, training and retaining of their teachers in their institutions. Secondly, having understood the current HRM trends and practices from sample universities, this research makes an attempt to conceptualise a static model that would facilitate any HEI to develop its human capital. Indeed, this model will help HEI to identify its contributing and inhibiting factors towards effective HRM

implementation. However, at the optimum level, HEIs, needs to contextualize according to the needs and priorities of its stakeholders.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With Indian higher education system potentially influenced by the globally challenging trends, education in common and higher education in particular, has been widely perceived as a means to create mass human capital for achieving a rapid rate in development terms. In this regard, we need to acknowledge the relevance of HRM in Indian higher education system as it is increasingly important to sustain our future as knowledge based society. Today's colleges and universities are obligated to bring in best HRM practices in its governance and thereby provide global standards for their staff and students. In order to ensure greater coherence of university activities, UGCACU (Association of Commonwealth Universities) organized a national conference on 'Human Resource Management Techniques in Indian Universities' in New Delhi in November, 2009. Indeed, this was the first of its kind held in India which highlighted the relevance of HRM practices in Universities. The UGC proposes to provide funding for the universities which will implement HRM techniques with a HR department as a pilot scheme. In this light, this research endeavor has made an attempt to study university human resource management in indian context, with special focus on engineering faculty in Tamil Nadu. In this process, the implication of the study involves understanding and identifying the ongoing issues, challenges and opportunities of Human Resource Management practices in technological universities in Tamil Nadu.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With HR being all pervasive in organizations irrespective of its objectives, it becomes imperative for the sustenance of HEI in developing countries, in this case, Indian engineering education. Indeed, HR has the potential to transform the relationship between the faculty and institution by establishing a more redefined role among these stakeholders. This redefined role can enhance accountability and free flow of communication by enabling transparency in decision making and faculty participation in decision making. Hence, there is a need to streamline the status of TE in the light of increased global expectations from the engineering graduates. Although HR has been employed in Indian industrial setting for several years, research on HR in TEI continues to develop. While in the recent past the study of HR has been enriched by many studies, however, it still remains a young discipline in educational context. This research makes a significant contribution to the existing research on HR for improving faculty management vis-à-vis human resource management of academic faculty. Also, there has been a paucity of studies on the role of HR in the context of Tamil Nadu. Empirically, this research puts forth certain important postulates about the need to evolve HR framework at institutional level from three institutions. In fact, this enabled the researcher to study the current HR practices in all these institutions. Subsequently, the HR framework developed in this thesis would help TEI to overcome their current inadequacies and further improve its institutional

performance by formulating appropriate HR strategies to the overall development of TE.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Innovation, Knowledge dissemination, and creativity are the life blood of mankind. Higher educational organizations play a vital role in the economy of the country and in the standard of living of human beings. It's broad function covers re-orientation of higher education, quality assurance in higher education, and management of higher education. They engage issues of private / public organization, equity and governance as well as physical fitness, policy planning, professional ethics, health consciousness, value education and assessment / evaluation system and the most significant concern of sustaining quality. In developing countries like India, higher educational organizations play a vital role in the national development process. The higher educational organizations are experiencing mounting students' expectations every day. Competition is blossoming and the liberalization plan is accelerating at a unique rate. The new competitive environment puts extra pressure on higher educational organizations to advance the quality of education. To afford quality education, the higher educational organizations have to attempt to change the learning and teaching scenario. In the learning situation, the organizations should create congenial atmosphere by providing best infrastructure facilities such as laboratory, library etc. In teaching state of affairs, the organizations should take part in developing the skills, competencies and capabilities of the teachers. To instruct quality education, the organizations should develop a favourable and conducive organizational climate. The pre-requisite for improving the organizational climate is, practicing the effective HRM in higher educational organizations. It is expected that the outcomes of this study will provide sufficient feedback to advance the HRM practices in higher educational organizations.

CONCLUSION

The socio-economic development of a country largely depends upon the effective organization and implementation of education. In India, education is seen as one of the ways to speed up social equality and mobility. The National Policy on Education visualizes that higher education should become dynamic in terms of consolidation and expansion of institutions, creation of more autonomous colleges and departments, redesigning the existing courses to cater to the needs of the learners, continuous training of teachers in the light of globalization of education, strengthening research and improvement in efficiency. The globalization of education at international and national levels warrants efficient performance of organizations giving space to quality development. The quality development is the crux of the difficulty in Indian higher education. To maintain quality bench mark, there is a need for efficient management amongst the working elements in the learning system. The human resources in the institution play a major role in realizing the objectives and goals of higher education. Perhaps, organization the human resources is the main purpose of an organization in the context of globalization. The present study

attempts to find out to what extent the human resource actions are agreed out in higher education to accomplish the stated objectives and goals. The outcomes of the learn will be helpful to the strategy planners to create suitable strategies in strengthening effective coordination of manpower resources in higher educational organizations.

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