Issues and challenges of Leadership and Role of Leader in Higher Education in India

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Abstract

Every generation needs strong leadership. A leader guides and inspires a group of people, playing a crucial role in their collective success and personal growth. A team leader specifically oversees a workgroup, providing direction and support. Working as a leader in a higher educational institute presents various issues and challenges but also presents various opportunities. It requires identifying various issues, developing effective solutions, and implementing strategies to enhance the institution's overall performance. NEP 2020 also says that effective governance and leadership that enables the creation of a culture of excellence and innovation in higher education institutions. Leaders of an HEI will demonstrate strong alignment to the constitutional values and the overall vision of the institution, along with attributes such as a strong social commitment, belief in teamwork, pluralism, ability to work with diverse people, and a positive outlook.

The leaders need to balance them appropriately, as progress takes place within educational institutions. The main areas that are taken into account in leadership are, establishing goals and expectations, strategic resourcing, planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum, promoting and participating in teaching- learning processes and development ensuring the formation of a disciplined environment. The leaders need to focus upon the development of professional relationships, their work and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning and the increase the influence on student outcomes. Leadership facilitates the achievement of desired goals and objectives by making improvements in the system of education. The 'Leadership Challenge' is about how leaders mobilize others to get

extraordinary tasks done in institutions. It's about the practices leaders use to transform values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity, and risks into rewards. It's leadership that makes a positive difference in the workplace and creates an environment in which people turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes.

Thus, the positive thinking by good leader paves the way for achieving the goal of higher educational institute. The purpose of this paper is to study the various issues and challenges in higher educational institute. This paper deals with the characteristics of leader, leadership challenges, types of issues, various functions by leader, responsibility of leader, role of leadership in higher educational institute etc. The paper also discusses about how good initiatives and clever strategy by a leader can make a better environment and pave the way to a bright future for higher educational institute.

Key words: **Leader, Issue, Challenge, Higher Education.**

Introduction:

The person who leads a group of people and guide them for their betterment and creates a good environment in society with his/her good ideas is a leader. He/ she is a visionary with a far sight who is organised . The leaders need to balance them appropriately, as developments take place within educational institutions. The main areas that are taken into account in leadership are, establishing goals and expectations, strategic resourcing, planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and curriculum, promoting and participating in teaching-learning processes and development ensuring the formation of a disciplined environment. The leaders need to focus upon the development of professional relationships, their work and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning and the greater the influence on student outcomes. Leadership is regarded as the prime factor in making improvements in institutions effectiveness. Leadership facilitates the achievement of desired goals and objectives and making improvements in the system of education.

The decentralized system has the advantage of head of institutions playing a key role in improving teaching quality. The wide autonomy of leaders in defining educational content and form goes hand in hand with the absence of responsibilities for results; therefore, a lot hinges on the ability of leaders to convince the institute on matters of development and changes conducive to the improvement of learning. As a result of various reasons (financing, public

employee status of teachers, inner operational rules, problems related to motivation) even genuinely innovative and motivated leaders have a hard job in carrying out their tasks. Given these circumstances, central education policy offers the opportunity to develop stimuli that help school leadership in enhancing professional accountability and performance. Policies that are meant to develop educational quality do not directly aim to improve institutional leadership, as central players contributing to the quality of teaching, are inevitable in implementing political initiatives meant to improve educational quality.

Quality in Leader:

L- Listing Capability

E- Efficiency

A- Activeness

D- Decision maker

E- Enthusiasm

R- Responsibility

Characteristic of leadership

1. Setting Goal, Vision, and Direction

Goals for any organization serve as the standard principles. Through these goals, leaders can create clearly stated objectives to guarantee the academic success of all students (Mendels & Mitgang, 2013). Creating goals helps to be focused, to prioritize needs and avoid wastage of time and effort working in the wrong direction. In that case, two types of goals should be categorized i.e., long-term and short-term. Long-term goals are associated with infrastructural/facility development that can pave the way for skill development while short-term goals include bringing out institutional changes for bettering the learning environment.

However, depending on the institution's situation short-term goals could be made part of the long-term goals and vice-versa. Through a participatory approach, each stakeholder should be involved to channel their energies into achieving the goals and a sense of belongingness must be nurtured. On a timely basis deviation from the goals should be spotted by the leaders and they should work towards mitigating those deviations. This also helps in monitoring the progress and evaluating the growth of the institutions.

2. Monitoring Student Progress and Faculty growth

The leader should develop various methods to evaluate the academic performance and social and emotional well-being of students and the teacher's teaching style. Through evaluation, the area of strength and areas of improvement can be analysed and prioritized. Evaluation should be conducted on a regular basis and should focus on the different skills rather than bookish knowledge. Leaders can evaluate the teacher's performance themselves or can take professional help. As resources are limited, institutions need to spend it on the most important areas by careful evaluation (Barkman, 2015).

3. Time Management

The growth of institutions also depends on effective time management by the leader. But mostly leaders use their time on day-to-day administrative activities which have no impact on student learning outcomes.

They should use/manage their time effectively and efficiently. Tasks like setting a vision and goal, staff training, student progress analysis, arrangement of the fund and finalizing the educational programs require proper time and regular intervention throughout the year. Institution's leaders can delegate some work to others so that they can focus on the most important work which is mentioned above. (Barkman, 2015)

4. Constructive Interpersonal

The most important leadership trait includes effective people engagement. leader should have effective interpersonal skills. Institutions leader have to interact with students by organising various professional development program. Stakeholders are from diverse backgrounds and have different priorities. Leader should be honest, caring, empathetic, active listeners, respect others, supportive, motivate others, and focus on the student's learning to build a rapport with the stakeholders. Rapport can be built only when one person trusts the other. leaders have to work on gaining the trust of the parents/community (Lasater, 2016).

5. Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is important so that one can understand whether the efforts translate into achieving the goal or not and it is a key to self-awareness. Regular self-reflection can help the institutions leader analyse the good and bad decisions. Leaders should take a pause and reflect on each decision taken. Learning from experience helps the institutions grow further. School leaders should be open to criticism which could enlighten herself/himself and can lead to new ideas. Each stakeholder should do the exercise of self-reflection but the institutions leader's reflection highly impacts the institutions because major decisions are taken by them. The self-

reflection environment will always create great success and work on the feedback for the growth of the institutions. (Barkman, 2015)

6. Establishing a Culture

Culture is intangible and can be created by the people of the organization. In institutions, the leader is the person who creates the foundation of culture. Each member should feel that a institution is a safe place and they can seek support.

Staff should feel free to share their innovative ideas for improving student learning. Individuals who put lots of effort into school development should be properly recognised. There should be a strong relationship between student-teachers, school leader-teachers and school leader-parents. Every stakeholder should be able to share his/her views/opinions/ideas on the school development by setting up a strong school culture (Barkman, 2015).

Every leader is unique in their own way. They have their strengths and weaknesses. Everyone is working in a different context like location, community etc. Despite the individual differences, every leader should embrace leadership traits to run a school successfully. The major traits highlighted in the article will help the school leaders to become successful leaders and lead by example.

Issues and challenges of leader in higher education

The education system, institutions, and students have been drastically changed over the last decade due to many factors. Issues and challenges 21st-century head of institutions are dealing with are much more complex than making up parents' minds to send their child to school the biggest challenge head of institutions had to face back then.

1, **Enrolment**: Student's enrolment is the process of arranging to attend institutions. Leader faces the many challenges to take admission for maintaining the quality of education in any institutions. Organising the test and procedure for the selection of admission is very big challenges for leader of institutions.

2. **Recruitment of academic staff:** Recruiting capable and qualified faculties to teach to a whole population of students is also another highlighted issue faced by the school leaders. Unlike in the past, the new technology helps to track down the most competent teachers out of a whole pool of applications, but still, the competition in the field of education makes it difficult to have a healthy recruiting process.

3.Lack of attendance: Attendance of students is drastically dropping due to many reasons. Some of these reasons are mostly unreachable by the head of institution, so even if the head of institutions have a solution, they are helpless as it is out of their control. Today, the struggle has become much more than maintaining good attendance.

4. **The discipline of the students:** The modern-day students are raised in a completely different from the world administrators grew up in. So, it's important that head of institutions try to understand where modern students are coming from in each situation. Leader should find out and take the actions accordingly.

5. **Lack of supervision:** It has been found that there is a poor concept of supervision in our institutions. In our country the process of supervision is characterised with the notion of inspection. Supervisors create fear during the process of supervision in the minds of teachers. This trend has created mistrust and reluctance among the teachers. The supervisors instead of providing constructive feedback, dictate to the teachers and hence no improvement takes place.

6. **Lack of coordination**: The problem of coordination has emerged due to weak communication between the policy makers, staff, parents and the community. The state of poor coordination in the system has promoted misunderstanding among the stakeholders. Teachers remain at the receiving end in all areas, be it making of the curriculum or any other policy. The teachers participate only in the implementation not in the development part. There is even lack of coordination between faculties and head of institutions which has snubbed any discussion on mutual problems faced by the teachers in institutions.

7. **Lack of physical and learning resources:** Due to lack of teaching and learning aids and ICT facilities in institutions, faculties face many problems during teaching process. Some institutions even do not have basic aids such as boards and books. Some institutions do not have proper infrastructure and smart and digital library. There are no playgrounds for the physical development of students. This situation has created more problems for faculties as they cannot provide the students wider opportunities for learning and development. In these conditions teachers fail to create meaningful learning environment in institutions.

8.Lack of computer skilled teachers: Technology plays a huge roll in all the latest trends in modern society and the field of education is no exception. But technology is not many school administrators' strong suit and this has made it a real challenge for them to identify what and when they should adopt technology to improve performance. So, lack of experienced and computer skilled teachers in the institution creates a lot of problem to maintain online status and records of students.

9**. Lack of financial support:** The establishment of new institutions is essential for meeting the educational needs of the increasing student population. While India wanted to increase more enrolment in higher education. The government is providing less financing support compare to needs of the institution for the higher education.

10.Lack of communication: Confusion results when leaders do not have regular and open lines of communication with their teaching staff or with their superiors. Because of overwhelming responsibilities, head of institutions tend to become less accessible, which leads to less face-to-face interaction, which is important for the teachers and students. Instead, issues usually are addressed in general meetings because of time constraints. Faculty tend to perceive that they are being preached at, instead of involved with meaningful discourse. This method if not effective with students in the classroom; leader cannot expect that it will work with their staff.

11.Partiality: A major problem can occur in schools when certain teachers, parents or community leaders shown favouritism based on their degree of influence or relationships with leaders. Many times, this bias is not intentional; it is easier to placate rather than spend a lot of time in a battle of the wills with someone who is known to be vocal about his discontent or who threatens to call district and state education leaders. An effective leader will make decisions based upon what is deemed to be best for the student and will stand firm in her position as advocate for children.

12. Politics: In most of institutions they have problems facing the internal politics by different group of teachers which hampers the main purpose of education. Head of institutions face such problems too. Administrative boards do not wish to see such environment in institutions. They try to find the solution for t0he betterment of institutions with the assistance of a leader.

Functions by Leader in Educational Institute

Motivating: It is important to develop motivation in order to carry out one's job and duties satisfactorily and achieve the desired goals and objectives. In educational institutions, some individuals work more productively, when the leaders make them feel that their work is meaningful. On the other hand, within the classroom settings, students differ from each other in terms of knowledge, competencies and abilities. Some students develop interest and enthusiasm towards their studies to a major extent. They come prepared to the class, even before the introduction of the new lesson. On the other hand, some students do not show

interest in studies and experience setbacks within the course of achievement of academic goals. Therefore, the leadership activity of motivating is important in encouraging the students towards enhancing their academic performance and in the achievement of desired goals and objectives.

Decision: The decisional roles that have been identified are four. These are, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator. The entrepreneur roles of the leaders focus upon putting into operation, modern and innovation methods and approaches that may lead to effective outcomes. As entrepreneurs, they need to upgrade their improvisation skills and abilities. The role of the leaders as disturbance handlers focuses upon handling disturbances and problems that may occur within the course of implementation of job duties and functioning of the educational institutions. In some cases, students or other members of the educational institutions may get involved in the conflicting situations or disagreements. Therefore, it is the job of the leaders to ensure, they get resolved peacefully and members of the educational institutions and fellow students establish good terms and relationships with each other. The role of the leaders as resource allocator focuses upon the fact that there are availability of adequate materials, equipment and technologies, which may render an effective contribution in facilitating learning among individuals and enabling them to achieve the desired goals and objectives. In order to facilitate the teaching-learning processes, it is necessary to ensure adequate materials and resources are available. As negotiators, the leaders ensure that the overall atmosphere within the working environment remains pleasant and amiable. They need to possess effective communication skills and ensure members work in co-ordination with each other.

The Leader play's role in different ways:

- **Manager or supervisor:** Responsible for overseeing all activities within the institutions.
- **Strategist:** Responsible for deciding how to approach tasks and develop a plan to accomplish them.
- **Communicator:** Responsible for distributing information to faculties and coordinators of institution.
- **Organizer:** Responsible for keeping track of and structuring various tasks, employees and documents.
- **Goal setter:** Responsible for determining the goals that members will work toward.

Responsibility of Leader

Responsibilities of a team leader includes decision-making, mentoring, developing the team's skills and managing conflict. Learning these important team leader skills is an ongoing process that requires regular practice and use. The leaders are the ones, who possess the responsibility to carry out the tasks and activities regarding themselves and other individuals in an appropriate manner. Some important responsibilities are.

Guide to faculties: An effective team leader mentors the faculties on achieving goals and developing necessary skills that get results. Guidance involves developing faculties performance, offering feedback and demonstrating the desired skills and expected work ethic.

Develop team strengths and improve weaknesses: It is also the responsibility of the leader to identify the strengths and weaknesses of faculties. By determining which faculties excels at which task, leader can delegate the required tasks to the appropriate person. It's also helpful to determine areas of opportunity and the appropriate steps to improve on them.

 Identify team goals and evaluate faculties progress: In order to measure team success, it's important to identify what success means. Evaluating goals and determining how the team will measure success can prevent miscommunication. This also gives team members a clear understanding of what they are expected to complete. Setting clear team goals and evaluating progress along the way allows teams to work collaboratively.

Resolve conflict: The nature of faculties is different in personalities, work traits and ideas, conflict can sometimes occur. The leader is responsible for preventing conflict where possible and resolving it when it does arise.

Develop team spirit: Organization is necessary when there are multiple team members working on a single goal. Individual projects, goals, communications and important documents should remain clear and accessible. It is the responsibility of the leader to develop team spirit and organize team meetings and progress toward the goal.

Traits of a team leader: Because the team leader is responsible for not only managing but also organizing the workplace, resolving conflict and planning tasks, the following traits are important:

- **Verbal and nonverbal communication skills:** Communication is crucial when leading and working with a team because leader will have to communicate with faculties and coordinators. A leader communicates in a way that is clear, effective and directive.

- **Organizational skills:** Organization is important when leader have multiple faculties working on one project. Strong organizational skills will help leader monitor progress and keep faculties motivated.

- **Ability to delegate:** The leader must delegate tasks to individual faculties. This requires the leader to trust in the abilities of the faculties.

- **Integrity:** The leader should lead like an example. A leader who has integrity is not only more likely to be trusted by their faculties, but also often will be respected and appreciated by the faculties.

- **Confident work ethic:** The faculties often mimic the work ethic of the leader. Displaying confidence in the task and the faculties itself can help to develop confidence.

Role of Leadership in Higher Education

In educational institutions, leadership role is regarded as indispensable. The job of the leaders is primarily meant to guide and lead the individuals in the right direction. In this way, they will be able to carry out their job duties satisfactorily as well as, overcome problems and challenges that may arise within the course of implementation of their job duties. The heads, directors and principals are the ones, who are vested with the authority to play leadership roles. The educators are also required to be effective leaders in guiding students towards the right direction and helping them to achieve academic goals. The students need to ensure that apart from making provision of academic concepts to the students, they also make provision of opportunities to them to hone their leadership skills. Development of leadership skills among students is also regarded as one of the important goals of the educational process.

The leaders particularly in higher educational institutions, where the students are adults need to recognize their roles. It is comprehensively acknowledged that adults are more responsible and recognize their job duties well. They assign priorities and ensure they carry out all tasks and activities and devote sufficient amount of time towards them. In the implementation of leadership roles, there are certain aspects, which need to be taken into consideration. These are, in adult education, the leaders put in sufficient amount of time and work diligently and resourcefully. Within the course of pursuance of academic programs, it is vital for students to conduct research on a regular basis and update knowledge and information. The activities and functions of the leaders are dominated by the issues and events of the system

of which they are a part. Leaders need to ensure that within the course of performance of job duties they do not experience any barriers. Hence, it is vital for them to put into operation, the measures and approaches to overcome barriers.

Significance of Leadership Roles in Higher Education

Transformational leadership is an effective leadership for school administrators. It renders a significant contribution in transforming the individuals into future leaders by making provision of control to them over their behaviors. In order to assume leadership roles, it is essential for the individuals to generate awareness and augment their competencies, so they can perform their job duties in a well-organized manner. Within the educational institutions, it is vital for leaders to form a culture that would lead to emergence of leadership skills not only among the heads and educators, but also among students. It is essential for educators to make provision of knowledge and information that would enable them to implement leadership skills in an operative manner.

Within educational institutions, the individuals, who are engaged in teaching positions are required to hone their educational skills and abilities. They need to be well-equipped with the subjects and concepts, which they need to impart to the students. In addition to generating awareness in terms of subjects and academic concepts, they are required to put into operation. These are, aligning tasks with objectives and strategies; building commitment, optimism, trust and co-operation; developing and empowering subordinates; encouraging and facilitating collective learning; interpreting the occurrence of complexities; making provision of appropriate solutions; organizing and coordinating activities and functions; promoting social justice and morality; securing the necessary resources and support and strengthening collective identity. The leaders need to make provision of guidance and information to their subordinates to make efficient use of resources. The leaders need to ensure that within the classroom, teaching-learning materials, infrastructure and technologies are well maintained.

Conclusion

In educational institutions, in order to lead to their operative growth and development, to achieve the educational goals and objectives and bring about up-gradation in the overall system of education, it is essential for the individuals to hone their leadership skills. It is the main job duty of the leaders to ensure, they make provision of appropriate information and guidance to the individuals to lead them in the right direction. They need to provide them with adequate support and assistance to carry out their tasks and activities satisfactorily. The leadership roles are classified into three main categories, interpersonal, informational and

decisional. The dimensions of leadership are, defining the vision, values and direction, improving conditions for teaching and learning, assignment of roles and responsibilities, redesigning and enriching the curriculum and instructional systems, improving teaching and learning processes, upgrading of quality of educators, building of relationships inside and outside of the educational institutions, selecting and developing smart tools, participating in providing effective solutions to problems and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. We have found that a team with good leader gives a better performance in institutions even in the society. A leader to guide and motivate to faculties in such a way that can impact in faculties. The faculties should teach to students in such a manner that our students can develop themselves and leadership skills will be developed amongst them, so that they can be better leaders for future. We as a leader can create a chain of leader for upcoming generations.

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