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# Managing Quality of Teaching – A Human Resource Management Perspective

**N.T. Vedachalam**

**A.G. Jayashree**

## **ABSTRACT**

India is being increasingly recognized as a knowledge power house which can supply value added, trained manpower delivering superior performance. The face of globalization has now turned towards liberalizing and promoting free trade in the services sector vis-à-vis education sector, through the implementation of GATS. This is going to place a great demand on the Indian Higher Education system in terms of quality. Institutions of higher learning therefore have a major responsibility in building quality by imparting knowledge, development of skill and improving the intellectual capabilities of its learners. To achieve this, strong commitment among all the stakeholders is a must. The teacher plays a pivotal role of all the stakeholders in contributing towards building quality. The teacher is the prime interface between the learner and the environment. A good teacher can create all the necessary impact on the learner even in the absence of required learning resources or the ambience, but even with the modern teaching technology and the world of resources available to the learner a bad teacher can mar the entire benefit of such facilities. This paper aims to project the role of teacher in building quality in higher education. An attempt has been made to project the Human Resource Management perspective to the process of managing teachers by the various colleges and universities. Teachers have to be looked at as intellectual assets of the organisation who are the major contributors to the value and brand of the colleges. Hence managing teachers as human assets through processes, like recruitment and selection, induction, training and retraining, quality of work life and performance management are highlighted. Finally a profile of a good teacher has been given.

## **Higher education in India**

Higher Education in India holds the credit of being the pioneer in starting the system of University education. Institutions like Takshila, Nalanda, Vikramashila, and Nadiavallabi were some of the centers of higher learning in the ancient period, which attracted scholars from the various parts of the world for the sake of knowledge. From then onwards India has been respected in the field of education.

In today's global scenario India has to successfully compete with other countries in the globalized free economy pattern. It requires innovation and breakthroughs in every field right from the conventional sector of manufacturing to the modern ones like Information technology and Biotechnology.

For this, India requires producing many scientists, engineers, doctors, managers and scholars. Producing such talented human resources for the country requires the higher education system to be strong and effective.

Primary education is not fully available to all Indians on an equity basis. There are large numbers of drop-outs after senior secondary making higher

***Prof. N.T. Vedachalam***

*Director, Badruka College Post-Graduate  
Centre, Osmania University, Hyderabad-500027*

***Mrs. A.G. Jayashree***

*Assistant Professor,  
Badruka College Post-Graduate Centre,  
Osmania University, Hyderabad-500027*

education available to a meager 6% of the population between the age group of 17 to 23. These situations pose a lot of challenges for the higher education sector. Now as India strives to compete in a globalized economy in areas that require highly trained professionals, the quality of higher education becomes increasingly important. Developing countries like China, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore are not only competing in the area of commerce and business but also in building an efficient academic system with research orientation. The recent London Times Higher Education Supplement ranking of the worlds top 200 universities included three in China, three in Hong Kong, three in South Korea, one in Taiwan and one in India (IIT at number 41, specific campus not mentioned). All these countries are competing for leadership position in the knowledge based economies

in the coming era. India has a very strong base to compete with other developing countries as far as higher education is concerned – it is the third largest in student numbers after China and the United States, it uses English as primary language of higher education and research, it has a long academic tradition and a large number of college and universities.

It is estimated that there will be a student population of 9.60 million to be provided access to higher education at the end of 2004-05 which will go up to 12.9 million by the year 2007-08. Added to this the GATS has opened up the entire world as prospective customer to higher education in India. Hence India has a challenge to provide quality higher education which is accessible and affordable to not only the Indian customer but to the entire world.

Year	No. of Colleges	No. of Universities	No. of students (in '000)	No. of Teachers (in '000)
1950-51	750	30	263	24
1990-91	7346	177	4925	272
1996-97	9703	214	6755	321
1998-99	11089	238	7417	342
2003-04	15000	300	9000	427

Source: UGC Annual Report 2001-02 & Selected education statistics from MHRD .

### Quality issues in Higher Education-Role of Teacher

We talk of quality in every aspect of life and business. A concept which was popularized by Deming and Juran has pervaded every business activity as the tool to secure a competitive edge in the market. Providing quality suitable to the international standards of customer expectation is the trend now. Even in the higher education sector India needs to provide quality suitable to the world standards in terms of using advanced technology and ability to manage a culturally diverse class of students.

Quality in higher education is the outcome of many factors at play. Some of them are:

- § Curriculum
- § Infrastructure and Learning resources
- § Teaching process
- § Staff resources
- § Quality of teacher

India distinction of having the world's second largest education system after China, according to the World Bank study, however one disheartening consequence of such unplanned expansion has been the decline in the quality of higher education. Nothing illustrates it better that the plummeting faith of employers in the University degrees and Diplomas. Thus quality concern in higher education should not just be restricted to access and affordability but the ultimate objective should be student development. The

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student is influenced more by the teacher than any other aspect in the learning process. A well designed curriculum, good learning resources may not be able to deliver any benefit if the teacher is not competent, similarly a very good teacher can inspire and ignite the learning process in the students in spite of the absence of all other resources.

Hence the role of the teacher has always been very crucial in the development of the students. Quality in higher education should primarily initiate a process of ensuring quality in the teaching and the teacher. The implementation of GATS is going to pose a serious threat to Indian colleges and universities in retaining the best of their talent. The scenario which GATS has presented in the education sector requires the teacher to play the key role in helping India to look at this new situation more as an opportunity rather than as a threat.

### **Managing Quality of teaching – Human Resource Management Perspective**

The quality of teaching and the quality of a teacher overlap and cannot be easily distinguished. The teaching quality generally represents Institutional performance whereas teacher quality is a measure of an individual's effectiveness and commitment. The process of managing quality in teaching needs to be looked at from the perspective of initiative taken by the college in procuring, maintaining, motivating and developing teachers which in turn facilitate quality teaching.

An assessment of the present situation as to how the colleges manage this process will help in understanding the importance of suggestions made further in the paper.

- Qualifying the eligibility tests like National Edibility Test (NET), or the State Level Eligibility Test are prerequisites of being eligible to take up teaching in the higher education which are also not very strictly adhered to by many colleges and universities.
- Lot of freshers and inexperienced teachers are found in the system with opening up of new colleges. There is no specific programme of induction. Lack of training and orientation

makes them poor role models.

- Absence of need based training programmes for teacher and no subsequent method for evaluation of training benefit.
- Absence of motivated teachers. The education system has never focused in developing good teachers. Students are given counseling to choose careers like engineering, medicine etc but the advice to become a good faculty is the last thing that comes. One needs to understand the distinction between human resource available for teaching and human resources willing to serve as faculty.
- Absence of resource that will encourage research orientation among young faculty.
- Evaluation of faculty performance is restricted only to student feedback. Absence of mechanisms to provide constructive feedback to faculty which will reinforce good teaching practices.

Therefore it is clear that the above issues really pose great challenge in developing quality in teaching. The Human Resource Management perspective can be adopted which will improve the process of managing the faculty with the aim of providing efficient and effective teaching to students. The HRM processes are considered here which could give an answer to the above problems.

### **1. Recruitment and Selection of Teachers**

Most of the colleges do not pay attention to the process of recruitment of faculty. No specific attempt is made to attract the best pool of talent. When one looks at the newspaper for job vacancies, the advertisements for some of the unskilled / less skilled jobs appear in the most attractive format projecting the company's brand image. But at the same time you will find advertisement for the post of faculty in a format which reveals the cost effectiveness of the approach. The job specification is just restricted to the required qualification and no specific mention is made of the personal attributes or requirement of soft skills, nor any attempt is made to project the image or brand of the college so that the best of the pool of

candidates are attracted. If the college cannot attract the best of talent, then obviously the selection is not going to be that effective as you do not have the best of the applications at your disposal.

The procedure of selection of the faculty is also restricted to fulfilling the eligibility criteria and at the most one round of personal interview followed by an aptitude test of giving a demonstration class. In the selection of a faculty for higher education the qualities that are to be looked for basically are good academic record all through the career, aptitude for research, excellent communication skills, and above all the ability to motivate and inspire students to learn. The selection procedure should allow to test each of these skills. Each university should standardize the process of selection of faculty which has been well researched and tested to suit the requirements of each stream. There should at the minimum be at least three to five rounds in the selection process. Each stage can be designed to test specific attributes. A suggested format of selection is given below.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description of the stage Objective to be fulfilled</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Preliminary Interview Test Communication skills</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>In-depth Interview Test competency in subject</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Group Activity( GD, Team Building) Ability to work in teams Interpersonal skills</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Presentations (Research based paper) Research orientation and presentation skills</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Final Interview Assess attitudes and behaviors/ Suitability to work culture.</b>

This process is being followed by many of the prestigious Universities/Institutions. This process can be modified depending on the level and experience.

## **2. Training and Retraining**

Another important aspect of managing the faculty to improve quality of higher education is to take a serious look at the training, retraining and development of faculty. Primarily training of faculty is restricted to attending seminars, QIP, FDP, workshops conducted by UGC/AICTE or the respective university or some premier institute. The training programmes are never need based. Each college/Institute should specifically organize training programmes by experienced professors or industry experts who will update them in their subjects. Another cost effective method could be faculty members can form an academic forum and meet once in a month where they can represent their ideas, research topics or at least discuss their problems. This can be on the same lines as quality circles. University should make it compulsory for each faculty to attend at least two such training programmes in a year. This can become serious criteria to extend affiliation and recognition. As far as retraining is concerned special focus should be laid by UGC in instructing various universities to make it compulsory for every faculty to be trained in education technology as the future is going to be the age of virtual classrooms.

Another often ignored area is the evaluation of training undergone by the faculty. The college should institute a system to measure, if there has been transfer of learning on the job. The best way is a conscious self appraisal by the faculty in this regard.

Hence the management should adopt a more scientific method of analyzing every teacher's training need and also conducting the same in a scientific manner.

## **3. Performance Management**

The performance of a faculty is usually measured on two basis. One is the examination results of students and second the feedback taken from the students. A faculty's performance is affected by internal and external factors.

Internal Factors  
External factors  
**Knowledge**

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**Institutions environment**  
**Proficiency and skill**  
**Infrastructure**  
**Motivation**  
**Teaching resources**  
**Commitment**  
**Organisation and management practices**  
**Positive attitude**  
**Opportunities for growth**

Therefore the designing of a performance appraisal format requires a serious consideration of the above factors. A suggested format is given:

- Identification of Key Performance Areas (KPA)
- Setting up standards of performance
- Performance analysis
- Goal setting
- Feedback

This five step process can be more systematic and logical in evaluating the performance of the faculty.

#### **Identifying the KPA's**

In the beginning of the academic year the Head of the Department/ Principal or Director should sit with each Individual faculty and decide on key performance areas of the faculty for that period. A faculty's role is not just restricted to teaching, it includes other activates like research, development of students through conducting various competition and events, developing consultancy and other administrative function of admissions, conducting exams etc. Among these areas specific areas are considered key for that period for each faculty and they are expected to concentrate on that area and show peak performance.

#### **Setting Standards**

Examination results can be considered the simple standard and verifiable indicator to evaluate the performance. Similarly deciding on the number and quality of research papers published, activities conducted etc should be predefined for each of the role and clearly communicated to the faculty

#### **Performance Analysis**

A self assessment can be made by the faculty as to factors that will help them achieve their goals and factors that will hinder the achievement of goals. There can be a discussion with the superior to make an effort to strengthen the facilitating factors and reduce the hindering factors.

#### **Goal-setting**

While setting goals for the faculty the management should keep in mind that these goals should be SMART Goals, that means goals which are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound. This helps motivate the faculty towards superior performance and they are found to examine and modify their behavior.

#### **Feedback**

Feedback is vital for any process to improve. The process of collecting Feedback from superiors, students and peers should be planned so as to give constructive and summative feedback. Once the strengths and weakness of the faculty are identified appropriate learning experience can be pursued to result in more competent performance.

Performance goals today should not just remain focused on student examinations results; these should consider factors like increase in brand value, growth of intellectual capital, improvement in quality of the teacher and consultancy. Linking the efforts, performance and rewards can be highly motivating.

#### **4. Induction of young teacher**

There are many young faculty members who are not provided with proper orientation in their initial years of their career. When proper guidance and orientation of the profession is not given in the beginning, wrong method of teaching and approach toward the profession may develop which may become very difficult to mend in the later part of the career. Hence the university should conduct orientation programmes for young faculty which are aimed at the following objectives:

- To impart knowledge to the young teachers in the new emerging areas of educational technology such as teaching methodologies,

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communication skills, managerial skills research methodology etc.

- To develop skills in formulating instructional objectives, curriculum design and evaluation techniques.
- To develop teaching competencies like communication skills, effective laboratory instruction and classroom management.
- To enable teachers, to devise appropriate teaching and learning strategies.
- To train teachers in use of local area networks, computer assisted instruction, multimedia packages and internet as instructional aid

Such programs will help the faculty in constantly updating themselves to the required standards.

### 5. Quality of Work Life

One of the most important factors in improving the quality of higher education is to ensure that faculty has quality of work life. It is the prime duty of the institution to provide them with an appropriate environment to learn, grow and participate in shaping the future of the organisation they work for. Quality of work like for a faculty would constitute;

- An environment where faculty are free from the anxiety and fear of losing employment. The contract based jobs are one of the many reason contributing to the growth of fear. This kills the attitude of belongingness and commitment towards the Institute.
- A system of adequate and fair compensation that will instill a sense of being appropriately rewarded by the management. A balance and fair link between reward and performance is needed.
- A work climate where there are equal opportunities to grow that stimulates creative abilities of each individual.
- A work setup that facilitates blossoming of individual potential. A basic precondition for this is the availability of freedom and autonomy.
- A place that is safe and hygienic.

Thus it is clear from the above elucidation

that a few initiatives in managing the faculty effectively can reap huge benefit to the entire system. However, the idea would lack completeness without mentioning that a teacher himself should possess certain traits and qualities in order to become an effective teacher.

### Qualities of an Effective Teacher:

- Willingness to learn, ability to stimulate and inspire
- Thrill and excitement of addressing the gathering of adolescent
- Ability to communicate with zeal and enthusiasm. Fluency provides joy of listening
- Humour makes teaching more interesting and effective
- Help students develop their core competencies.
- Ignite the young minds to learn not just the subject but to develop character.
- Plan lectures/teaching to instill self-reliance, self discovery and critical mindedness.
- Self regulation among teachers and adhering to certain norms of behavior and ethics are a must whatever be the provocation otherwise.
- Should have the ability to recognize and manage change.
- Some sort of charisma is required by the teacher to reach the students and gain and hold their attention.
- The skill of lecturing is the rhetoric ability to move and inspire people, not just the verbal rendition of the text book. It is the talent to render personally and persuasively that which may be by its very nature abstract, technical and impersonal.

### Conclusion

Thus we may conclude that good teachers are not readily available in the market that one can easily pick up. The institutes need to take initiative in developing a proper mechanism right from recruitment to retain the faculty. We must remember that today's students are tomorrow's teachers. The reality is that today's teachers were yesterday's students. It is the duty of policy makers and leaders of higher education to make a two pronged effort to improve the teaching quality of in service teachers and to augment the

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teaching quality of teacher to be (today students). In both the cases the focus ought to be on student's development and quality education. This will necessitate a dedicated, honest and committed top management who can supervise, guide and inspire the institution. And we have to move fast as with the implementation of GATS there is no chance to take leniency as far as quality issues are concerned.

***"Teachers are the makers of history. A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where the influence stops"*** - Henry Brooks Adams (1838-1918)

Let there be an effort from both the management and the teacher to dedicate themselves to Adam's ideal.

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