

Promoting Talent Management Practices in Higher Education Institutions in India

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Abstract:

The paper focuses on the higher education sector in India, which occupies a prominent place in the human resource development of the nation. The existing literature indicates that, the higher education institutions in India are facing major problems of talent crunch and faculty retention. Lack of faculty talent and increasing rate of faculty attrition is hampering the quality of higher education. Therefore, acquiring and retaining good faculty talent has become a major challenge for institutions today.

This calls for serious thought and action from the educationists and policy makers of India. The institutions need to change their approach and philosophy towards dealing with faculty. They need to implement encouraging HR Culture in their institutions which would recognize Faculty as 'Talent' and should invest in faculty development and retention programmes. Investing in these intellectual assets can bring significant improvements in enhancing the quality of teaching-learning process in higher education and also contribute to the growth and development of the institution.

The current paper will emphasize on the need and significance of promoting talent management practices in higher education institutions in India for faculty, who constitute the human capital of the institution. The survival and growth of higher education is inevitable for the socio-economic development of the country. It aims to highlight that with the advent of talent management practices in these institutions, the talent crunch faced by institutions during recruitment will be reduced and will lead to the development and empowerment of faculty, enhanced level of faculty retention and institutional

development. It will also help in developing a skilled and knowledgeable future talent pool for the nation.

Key words: Talent Management, Higher Education Institutions, Intellectual Assets, Human Capital and Talent Crunch.

Introduction

The 21st century era of globalisation and information technology, is experiencing the growing need of Talent Management worldwide. India too, has not remained unaffected by this much needed change, needed for managing human resources, more likely known as the human capital today. The industrial sector of India have begun to take initiatives for the implementation of talent management practices to manage their human capital so as to sustain the competition. But it is very sad that the higher education sector of our country which plays a vital role in the human resource development of the nation, has not yet been able to properly promote and implement the culture of talent management.

It can be argued that, the higher education institutions in India are dealing with issues of talent crunch and retention of faculty. This is happening as most of the institutions fail to understand the broad dimensions of talent management, its proper application and its benefits. Institutions are reluctant to accept that, faculty are their intellectual assets and the human capital of the institution. They play a significant role in the development of an institution and in grooming and developing the students, who are the future talent pool of the nation. They play a major role in student learning and hence it becomes the prime responsibility of institutions to retain these intellectual assets.

It can further be argued that, the development and prosperity of a nation depends on its educational institutions, which speaks volumes of the transformation of the young minds

of the country and helps in channelizing their energies into productive ventures. Educational institutions pave the way for the political, economic and social development of the country by producing skilled and knowledgeable human capital.

The implementation of appropriate talent management initiatives in higher education institutions can lead to the development of the human capital of the nation. The role of intellectual and knowledgeable teachers in the development of the students and the nation as a whole, cannot be denied as they are the creators of a strong foundation of knowledge who play an instrumental role in the transformation and development of the youth of the nation.

In order to enhance and maintain the quality of higher education, institutions need to focus on faculty development and retention by implementing effective talent management practices. For sustaining competition and meeting global standards, the institutions need to develop new strategies and models to develop, retain and empower their human capital. There is a need to rethink and rejuvenate the existing HR practices in the higher education institutions in India.

The above arguments can be well supported by the outcomes of the research by following authors. (Ewell 1991), (Cornesky 1991) and (Chen et al 2006) in their research work have mentioned that, at present India is striving to compete in a globalized economy in areas that require highly trained professionals and thus the quality of higher education has become increasingly important. Experience which the students will derive from higher education is, to a large extent, dependent on the performance of faculty, both as teachers and researchers. The faculty has a major role in student learning. Extant literature underpins the importance of faculty for quality in higher education. Further, (Times News Network 2006) has highlighted that presently, the biggest challenge faced by technical educational institutions in India is the acute

shortage of qualified and competent faculties. (as cited in Gupta and Sethia 2011, 351)

(Shikha 2012, 21) in her research work, related to talent acquisition and retention issues of faculty in higher education, has highlighted the importance of teacher in the educational system and expressed concern about faculty retention in higher education institutions. In this context, the author has stated that, “A nation is built to a large extent in its educational institutions – in its classrooms, laboratories, libraries and playing fields. Educational institutes not only produce highly skilled and enlightened manpower needed for the political, economic and social transformation and development of our country but also shoulder the responsibility of lending dynamism, resourcefulness and intellectuality to it. The teacher is the backbone of the educational system, the maker of mankind and the architect of society. A nation grows with the teachers and with the education imparted to the people. It is in this respect, that the role of the teachers acquires significance in shaping society and in bringing revolutionary changes in the development of the country. The retention of this community in educational system especially individual institutes is necessary for the effective and proper use of the resources for rendering maximum service to society through building up the future human resource pool of the nation”.

(Chen et al 2006) has quoted, that an institution with talented faculties can develop a reputation for being a great place to work, with great learning environment where quality in education is expected. An institution in higher education, therefore, needs to be able to develop and deploy faculty who can articulate the passion and vision of institution and satisfaction of students. Faculty members as internal customers satisfy the working environment of universities. (as cited in Gupta and Sethia 2011, 352)

(Kuanr 2007, 59) has stated that, “Every where, higher education is faced with great challenges and difficulties related

to financing, equity of conditions at access into and during the course of studies, improved staff development, skilled based training, enhancement and presentation of quality in teaching, research and service, relevance of programmes and employability of graduates.”

Literature Review

(Powell 2010) has stated that, the retention of employees in higher education institutions (HEIs) is a serious concern as the high turnover rate of academic staff poses a major challenge to these institutions. High employee turnover has grave implications for the quality, consistency, and stability of academic enterprises. Turnover can have detrimental effects on students and remaining academic staff members, who struggle to give and receive quality services, when positions are vacated and then filled by inexperienced personnel (as cited in Selesho and Naile 2014, 295)

(Glenn A. Daley 2006) has stated that recruitment and retention of teachers is the important factor where there is a need to create a pipeline and also to develop a concept of succession planning as it becomes necessary if any faculty member leaves the institute in the mid-session. In most of the institutes the new teachers cannot keep up with the experienced and highly qualified old faculty members. (as cited in Shikha 2012, 21)

(Lucrecia and Glenn A. Daley 2006) in their research work found that universities and higher education institutions are at the crossroads in terms of their future development. Moving ostensibly from institutions that enjoyed heavy government subsidy, outdated and protected work practices that functioned on the quaint concept of collegiality, they have suddenly found that the structures and processes that served them so well in the past are no longer relevant in the new world order of e-commerce, street smart and fickle students who

demand high quality and progressive and flexible teaching and learning practices that will provide them with the edge upon graduation. (as cited in Shikha 2012, 22)

(Bushe 2012, 279) has stated that, “Academic staff retention refers to the process of the ability of an institution to not only employ qualified academic staff, but also retain competent staff through the establishment of a quality work-life, motivated staff climate, best place of work, and being an employer of choice, depending upon dedicated formulation and execution of best practices in human resource and talent management”.

(Lynch 2007) has mentioned that research has shown that higher education institutions lag behind industry in talent management practices. (Cobb 2007) has stated that for many of the higher education institutions, talent management is a relatively new and untapped opportunity despite its importance in offering these institutions a proven and practical way for driving competitive advantage. (as cited in Rudhumbu 2014, 86).

(Rasheed and Sarwar 2010, 2) in their research work have stated that, “Universities are the center of higher education where teachers play an important role in ensuring high quality of education by developing their students as global citizens for the outside corporate world. This is possible when teachers in universities are motivated enough to accomplish their goals effectively. Teachers are the building blocks of universities and they are undoubtedly, the developers of positive and progressive society in any country. It is therefore, necessary to have highly motivated teachers particularly in universities where teachers’ motivation is extremely demanded. The rule of thumb in human resource management is that retaining employees is less costly than hiring new ones. When teachers in universities perform well, students are also high achievers and universities contribute more towards higher education.”

(Martin 1999) and (Pienaar 2005) have stated that, higher education institutions more than any other organisations are dependent on the intellectual abilities and commitment of academic staff. The intellectual and creative abilities of academic staff determine the survival and sustainability of higher education institutions. Consequently, in order to function effectively, higher education institutions are, to a large extent, dependent on the commitment of academics. (as cited in Pienaar and Bester 2008, 33)

Problem Statement

The existing literature highlights that, most of the higher education institutions in India have not yet implemented proper talent management practices for faculty and neglect the investments needed for the development and retention of their human capital. Therefore, they are experiencing the problems related to faculty acquisition, development and retention. They face skills shortage or talent crunch at the time of faculty recruitment and also have to incur heavy expenses repeatedly on faculty recruitment and development due to poor retention policies. Most of the institutions are unable to withstand the pressure of globalization and thus fail to meet the standards due to lack of proper talent management practices. This has affected the teaching-learning process and the standard of education to a great extent. Thus, this necessitates the need of promoting and implementing effective talent management practices for the growth and development of faculty, students, institution and the nation as a whole.

Objectives of Study

- To focus on the need of talent management practices in higher education institutions.

- To emphasize on the promotion and implementation of talent management practices in higher education institutions.
- To highlight the outcomes and benefits of implementing talent management practices to the faculty, students, institution and the nation.

Research Methodology

The method of analytical research is adopted for the study. The researcher has made extensive use of secondary data. All the data has been collected through secondary sources which includes websites, online journals, research papers, books and magazines.

Discussion

The present paper discusses the concept of talent and talent management, the need of promoting talent management practices for faculty development and retention in higher education institutions. It also discusses the outcomes and benefits of implementing talent management practices to the faculty, students, institution and the nation at large.

Defining Talent Management

The term Talent Management was coined by the American Consultancy, Mckinsey and Company in 1997 through its report on “The War for Talent”, since then, it has been attracting huge interest from researchers and practitioners around the world. Organizations worldwide have begun to make huge investments in their human capital to develop, empower and retain their most valuable assets.

Talent Management is a never ending, on-going process and not a one time objective to be achieved. It focuses on

efficiently managing the human capital of the institution or organization. It is a comprehensive term and has many broad dimensions which includes: Talent Acquisition, Learning and Development, Performance Management, Compensation Management, Retention and Succession Planning.

Mckinsey, has given the definition of talent that, “Talent is the sum of a person's abilities, his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgment, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow.” (as cited in Beechler and Woodward 2009, 274)

CIPD has defined talent as, “Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential.” (as cited in Born and Heers 2009, 17)

Talent Management has been defined by many authors in different ways like, (Creelman 2004) has quoted, that several recent articles in the practitioner-oriented literature describe “talent management” as “a mindset”. (Cheloha and Swain 2005) have mentioned it as, a key component to effective succession planning. (Redford 2005) has stated, that it is an attempt to ensure that “everyone at all levels works to the top of their potential”. (as cited in Seth and Narang 2014, 2).

(Berger and Dorothy 2011, 318) have stated that, “Talent Management is a meaningful, shared, conscious and deliberate approach undertaken to attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet the defined current and future organizational needs in terms of capability, behaviour, attitude, knowledge and style.”

(Parthasarathy and Pingle 2013, 129) in their research paper, related to the need for Talent Management System in Technical Educational Institutions in India, have given the following model for managing the talent in Technical Educational Institutes.



Talent Management Model – (Source Oxford Strategic Consulting)

(Morton 2006) has stated that, Talent Management consists of eight categories of activities, those being Recruitment, Retention, Professional Development, Leadership Development, Performance Management, Feedback/M Measurement, Workforce Planning and Culture. Further, (Fitz-enz 2005) has mentioned that, Talent Management encompasses six human resource services: Staffing, Leadership Development, Succession Planning, Performance Management, Training and Education and Retention. (as cited in Shrimali and Gidwani 2012, 30)

Need of Talent Management Practices in Higher Education Institutions

It can be argued that, the higher education institutions in India are facing acute problems of talent crunch and faculty retention. Retention of talented faculties in higher education institutions is extremely vital for the survival of these institutions and enhancing the quality of education. The success and growth of an academic institution largely depends on the faculty who are the human capital of the institution. This requires an change in the approach of higher education

institutions towards recognizing, developing and retaining good faculty talent in institutions.

Due to the impact of globalization and information technology, the higher education institutions in India are undergoing unprecedented changes. To respond to these changes, the institutions have to continuously concentrate on cost reduction and quality enhancement to compete in a global environment so as to provide world class learning experience to the students.

The recruitment and retention of faculty has become a major challenge for many higher educational institutions in India. This is leading to the decline in the quality of higher education, thus impacting the process of knowledge generation and development of the future talent pool of the nation.

According to the report of (UGC 2003, 13) on Higher Education in India: Issues, Concerns and New Directions, it has been stated that, “Good Faculty is a must for any higher education institution aspiring for Quality. It is high time that an Indian Higher Educational Service, along the lines of the IAS, is formed. This has the advantage of quality control of the teaching faculty for higher education. A new Human Resource Development Policy shall be evolved to facilitate this. This could assure that there is continuous infusion of young blood in to the teaching cadre; which is not happening at the moment.”

Further (UGC 2003, 36) has indicated that, “Unless the quality and standard of Indian higher education institutions is enhanced zealously and sustained at a high level through innovation, creativity and regular monitoring, it seems to be difficult for the Indian academics/professionals to compete in the World scene. This calls for suitable assessment and accreditation mechanisms to be available in the country to ensure the quality and standard of the academic/training programmes at higher educational institutions”.

According to the eleventh plan report of (UGC 2011, 45) it has been mentioned that, “About higher education in India, it

has been found that, in order to promote quality and excellence, considerable thought and resources have to be invested into faculty development. There is a strong need that value-additions are made to faculty resources through 'orientation programmes' and 'refresher courses'. Continuous professional development of faculty members in higher education needs to be an ongoing process. The key-role played by faculty members in the promotion of quality teaching and learning has long been recognised. The equation between teachers' motivation and the quality of education is too well-established to require any elaboration.”

It can be argued that, effective implementation of talent management practices in higher educational institutions will help in reducing the talent crunch faced by the institutions at the time of recruitment. It will further lead to the development, empowerment and retention of faculty.

The institutions will be able to generate skilled and dynamic future human resource pool. This would promote research and innovation leading to the socio-economic development of the nation, thus contributing to the human resource development of the country.

Outcomes and Benefits of Implementing Talent Management Practices

It can be argued that, talent management practices in higher educational institutions will contribute to the process of faculty development by enhancing their knowledge and skills and facilitate in fostering high performing and committed faculty members. It will further bring in innovations in the pedagogy thereby raising the standard of higher education in India. Such practices will largely reduce the problem of talent acquisition, development and retention issues faced by most of the institutions.

The above argument is supported by the research work of the following authors,

(Hughes and Rog 2008) have stated that, “The executive talent management process helps to build competencies, skills and career plans, maximize contribution, preparation for advancement or transitioning to retirement. In addition to contributing to the effective recruitment and retention of employees, an organization’s talent management strategy should also contribute to employee engagement. Further, (Collings and Mellahi 2009) have mentioned that, “Effective talent management will have an indirect positive relationship with organizational performance, mediated by work motivation, organizational commitment, and extra role behaviour acting separately or in combination with one another.” Talent Management strategies develop innovation capability and achieve a high level of performance. (as cited in Dhanabhakyaam and Kokilambal 2014, 32)

It can further be argued that, talent management practices, will lead to an improved learning experience to the students as knowledgeable and skilled faculty, will expose the students to the latest developments through innovation and improved pedagogy. Improved teaching-learning process can help in fostering proper understanding of knowledge and many employability skills amongst students and prepare them to face the challenges of this highly competitive knowledge economy.

It will groom and develop the students who are the future talent pool of the nation.

It will foster research and innovation leading to the human resource development of the nation.

Further, such practices will largely reduce the replacement costs incurred by the institutions on the acquisition, training and development of faculty by reducing the rate of faculty attrition. It will also help in the succession planning of the institution by developing an efficient leadership pipeline so as to formulate and implement innovative practices

and ideas to consistently deliver quality education and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. It can play a vital role in incorporating the HR culture in higher education institutions and enhancing the effectiveness of HR Policies in institutions. Thus, implementing talent management in institutions benefits the faculty, students, institution and the nation at large.

Conclusion

The discussion in this paper throws light on the increasing rate of talent crunch and poor retention of talented faculty in most of the higher education institutions in India. Many institutions are facing difficulties in managing their faculty talent and have to deal with talent crunch during faculty recruitments. This is happening due to the reluctance of the institutions in promoting and implementing effective talent management practices. Despite of the benefits it offers, the field of academics is far behind the industries in implementing such practices. They still fail to recognize and accept that faculty are their most valuable assets who need to be provided with developmental opportunities and an encouraging work culture to enhance their performance levels.

Talent management practices to a great extent can help to curtail the problems of talent crunch during faculty recruitments and promote better talent acquisition, development and retention of faculty in higher education institutions. Such practices will drastically improve the knowledge and skills of faculty, leading to an enhancement in their levels of performance and commitment. This will have a positive impact on the performance of students as faculty play a major role in student learning.

Talent management practices will bring innovations in the pedagogy and significantly improve the teaching-learning process in higher education institutions and also facilitate in fostering the culture of research amongst faculty and students.

It can play an instrumental role in grooming and developing the students, who are the future talent pool of the nation. It can revamp and rejuvenate the quality of higher education leading to the social, economic and political development of the country. This will collectively contribute to the human resource development of the nation.

Finally, such practices will help in developing excellent academicians, leaders, educationists and policy makers who can bring in research and innovation and act as catalyst in bringing reforms for quality enhancement and sustenance in higher education in India.

Recommendations

- The higher educational institutions in India whether aided or unaided should adopt a standardized procedure for faculty recruitment and selection which will ensure the entry of knowledgeable and intellectual faculty into the teaching profession. They should not resort to unethical and corruptive practices as it degrades the quality of education and undermines the dignity of teaching fraternity.
- The administrators need to incorporate the talent management culture in their institutions where faculty is considered as 'talent' and implement proper practices to retain and develop these invaluable assets.
- The institutions should recognize faculty as their intellectual assets and invest heavily into faculty development and retention so as to gain a competitive advantage and attain sustainable development. This will enhance the performance and commitment of faculty and will yield long term benefits to the institution.
- The institutions should design an effective Performance Management System for assessing the performances of

faculty. It should provide valuable inputs and feedback to the faculty for improvements and self development.

- The institutions especially the unaided or private ones should design appropriate compensation for the faculty so as to keep them motivated and committed towards delivering their best performances. The institutions should not compromise in quality of education by providing meagre salaries to the faculty or appointing poor talent for lower salaries.
- The institutions should formulate proper retention strategies to deal with faculty turnover. Effective and consistent implementation of talent management practices will increase the rate of faculty retention and improve the quality and standard of higher education in India.

Scope for Future Research

Talent Management is a comprehensive term that has tremendous scope to be explored. A lot of research can be carried out on various aspects of talent management in many aided or unaided i.e. public or private higher education institutions. It can be also be applied and studied even in the primary, secondary and higher secondary schools where there is need to promote quality education from the grass root level. The role of a teacher is extremely crucial in the educational system and such practices can play a vital role in enhancing the performance and commitment of teachers. Research in educational institutions can provide valuable insights in dealing with various problems and issues and benefit the society at large.

It also has tremendous scope in the industries where globalization and information technology has changed the nature of work and managing and retaining talent has become even more challenging and complex. Research in different

industrial sectors will help in better understanding the applicability and usefulness of talent management.

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