

Impact of Faculty Development Program (FDP) on the Quality of Higher Education

¹Akil Saiyed, ²Babita Saiyed

¹ Director & Dean, ² Professor & Principal

¹Parul Institute of Law,

¹Faculty of Law, Parul University, Vadodara, India

Abstract : Any institute is known by its people and in particular the institute of higher education is known by its faculty. Quality of the faculty member is an essential element of the quality assessment of the institute as well as the students. Out of various intrinsic parameters for the appraisal of institutional quality viz. curriculum design, teaching and learning, evaluation, learning resources, infrastructural facilities, organizational efficiency, etc. most of them are faculty driven and has direct bearing on the expertise and intelligence of the academic staff. Teachers whether at primary or PG level plays vital role in the institutional building as well as the quality of the outcome, i.e. students. Faculty Development Program provides an opportunity to acquire new knowledge, increase vitality and self-renewal for an individual. With the introduction of systems credit based education system the faculty development programs have become more important for inter-disciplinary development of the academia. Moreover the performance based appraisal system for faculty has made FDP quite substantial for individual's assessment. The present paper narrates the significance of such Faculty Development Program for the quality of the higher education in India.

Keywords : Faculty Development, Quality of Higher Education

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of faculty development has long been an integral part of higher education's strategy for gaining new knowledge, self-renewal and increased vitality. Steinert defined Faculty development as wide range of activities that institutions apply to support faculty members' roles. This includes programs designed to improve the performance of faculty members in education, research and administration as well as augmenting organizational capacities and culture. Such programs are emphasized because of their potential to change entailed faculty members to attain new knowledge, diverse skills and abilities in many aspects including: Managing multiple roles and new responsibilities, such as, micro-group teaching, problem-based tutorials, case-based discussions, become mentors and develop and evaluate new curricula, etc. Integrating technology into teaching, learning, and research and master new computer-based educational programs as well as leadership and management proficiency.

High-quality professional training programs for faculty members have become essential to higher education institutions in order to be able to compete in this ever-changing world. The role of teacher in higher education institute is not limited to foster teaching and supervising but extends to meeting new challenges, mentoring, updating knowledge in the respective field, research in concerned area, etc. It is clear that faculty development has become well established and has grown into a recognized activity within higher education.

II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FDP

In 1975, Gaff conceptualized the faculty development in higher education as those activities which help teachers improve their teaching skills, design improved curricula and enhance the organizational climate for education. Later on Stritter et-al described setting up individual consultations on teaching skills, curriculum design and collaborative educational research. In the 1980s, a growing interest in cognitive theories of learning was associated with the creation of teaching improvement programs focused on the design of courses and the use of learning methods that stressed students' cognition and information processing, including a growing emphasis on the teacher's ability to translate his or her content expertise in ways to meet the identified needs of learners and the ability to 'reflect in practice'.

III. COMPONENTS OF FDP

Various authors have termed a number of metaphors for the term faculty development. Some of them are listed as follows,

- (i) Instructional development which emphasized the development of faculty skills involving instructional technology, small group teaching, media, courses, and curriculum design.
- (ii) Professional development which emphasized the development of individual faculty members in their professional responsibilities as educators, researchers, and administrators.
- (iii) Organizational development which emphasized the requirements, and main concerns of the institution.
- (iv) Career development which emphasized faculty preparation for career advancement. Personal development which stressed on life planning, interpersonal and communication skills of faculty members.

Bergquist and Phillips described three components of faculty development; (1) instructional development, (2) personal development, and (3) organizational development. The first category included practices such as curriculum, development teaching diagnosis, and training. Personal development generally involves activities to encourage faculty growth, for example interpersonal skills training and career counseling. Organizational development aims to advance the institutional environment for teaching and decision making as well as includes activities for both faculty members and administrative staff. Developing managerial skills and team work attitudes are important components of organizational development. Fullan suggests that the FDP should be designed to initiate and sustain changes not only at an individual level but also the whole of institute level. It should provide adequate cognitive support for competency development of an individual as a teacher.

Another classification that included organizational strategies, fellowships, comprehensive programs, seminars, workshops, and personal activities. One way is starting with orientation for new faculty members, and then moving to instructional, leadership, and

organizational developmental programs. Perhaps, the critical point regarding workshops and seminar programs is that they should be planned, in response to the needs of faculty members, with participants being aware about what to expect.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF FDP FOR QUALITY

Quality improvement of education requires four conditions, viz. (1) The person must have the desire to change, (2) knowledge of what to do and how to do it, (3) a supportive work environment, and (4) reward for changing. Auspiciously, the first two conditions of change can potentially be achieved through faculty development activities. Faculty members need to be prepared enough by some sort of a faculty development program (FDP) in order to deal with the rapid changes and shifting paradigms in higher education. Moreover, FDP also manage change by enhancing individual strength and abilities as well as organizational capacities and overall culture. FDPs are tangible indicators of the institutions' inner faith in their academic workforce. Such programs facilitate academicians in a way to, (a) develop a deeper understanding of who they are as teachers, (b) understand how this deeper understanding affects the classroom experience, (c) apply concepts to enhance their teaching skills, (d) have increased teacher self-efficacy, and (e) experience increased satisfaction with teaching.

Effective faculty development programs integrates all aspects of development: personal, professional, and organizational. It brings holistic development of students in higher education. It also includes faculty wellness and institutional quality of life, and opportunities for personal growth and career renewal. Nevertheless the participants of FDP are expected to apply their new learning in the institute. Individuals commitment to enact change in their own practice as well as willingly sharing the insights with their colleagues may foster the quality improvement at the institute level. At the same time the positive environment of the workplace is desired so as to recognize and support the attempts of changes initiated by an individual.

V. CONCLUSION

A well-designed FDP crucially address expanding faculty awareness about vitality and renewal of teaching skills, strengthening relationships between colleagues, supporting stated institutional missions and dealing with both the faculty member's and institution's capacity to survive. With vertical growth and horizontal expansion of the higher education sector, there is a need for developing professionalization of teaching practices. A classical vocation of teaching has transformed into a skilled profession that requires multifaceted talent of an individual to be an efficient teacher in higher education institute. Faculty development is a continuous process and not only just providing some workshops and lectures not expected to change faculty members' way of teaching overnight. On one hand FDP emphasis primarily on teaching and instructional effectiveness, it also reinforce individual's capacity to be a change agent at institute level. Thus two dimensional approach, i.e. individual and institutional for individual's development through FDP leads to quality enhancement of the education. Indeed, FDP constitutes a strategic lever for institutional excellence and quality, and essentially important means for advancing forward institutional readiness to bring in the desired change in response to the ever growing complex demands of quality of higher education at universities as well as colleges.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bergquist WH, Phillips SR. Components of an effective faculty development program. *J High Educ* 1975;46:177-211.
- [2] Fullan M. *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. 3rd ed. New York: Teachers College; 2001.
- [3] Gaff JG. *Toward Faculty Renewal: Advances in Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 1975.
- [4] Kogan JR, Conforti LN, Yamazaki K, Lobst W, Holmboe ES. Commitment to change and challenges to implementing changes after workplace based assessment rater training. *Acad Med*. 2017;92:394-402. doi:10.1097/ACM.0000000000001319
- [5] Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15 (2), 4-14.
- [6] Slade B. Professional learning in rural practice: a sociomaterial analysis. *Journal of Workplace Learning*. 2013;25(2):114-124.
- [7] Sorcinelli MD, Austin AE, Eddy PL, Beach AL. *Creating the Future of Faculty Development: Learning From the Past, Understanding the Present*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing, Inc.; 2005.
- [8] Steinert Y. Faculty development: from workshops to communities of practice. *Med Teach*. 2010; 32:425-428.
- [9] Stritter FT. Faculty evaluation and development. In: McGuire CH, Foley RP, Gorr A, Richards RW, editors. *Handbook of Health Professions Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 1983. p. 294-318.
- [10] Wergin JR, Mason EJ, Munson PJ. The practice of faculty development. *J High Educ* 1976; 47:289-308.