

# NEED FOR TALENT MANAGEMENT IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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**ABSTRACT-** Many business leaders, practitioners and academicians attach great value to talent and talent management (TM), but there is still little known about how (and how well) TM really works in practice, especially in a higher education system. In addition, current assumptions, viewpoints and actions appear to be based on a narrow and biased TM 'paradigm'. The primary focus of the present study is to explore the need for talent management system in Indian higher education system. The paper considers key issues and challenges related to quality of faculty and explores the ways in which a talent management system can be used as a strategy to attract and retain talented faculty.

Considering the competitive global market, there is an immediate need to improve the talent management practices to attract, select, develop and retain the talented faculty. Being producers of knowledge in a knowledge economy, higher education institutions are expected to value Talent Management which would not only improve the quality of faculty but also help in gaining a competitive advantage. The study explores the thrust and initiative of talent management in academics.

**KEYWORDS-** Higher education, Talent Management, Faculty

## INTRODUCTION

Much has been discussed lately about talent crisis in every industry. Higher education institutions are no exception. The focus on education sector has tremendously increased in the economic planning during the last decade. While higher education was seen as a thing of the elite class in the society, today it has become more accessible and affordable to the general public and the gross enrolment ratio has eventually increased. Though the capacity has tremendously been enhanced, the education sector is facing enormous hurdles related to talent. Despite many interventions by the Central and State government, the higher education sector is in a state of complete flux. "Quality of faculty" being one of the pillars of HEIs doesn't appear to have any intervention to improve the quality. It's a common perception that higher education institutions are better at helping other organizations' employees develop their talent than helping their own employees. A major shortage in teaching talent is paralyzing Indian higher education. The current strength of 8.2 lacs professors and faculty is 32 percent lower than the required number of 12 lacs. What's even more worrying is that by 2020 the sector will need an additional faculty of 15 lacs to join its ranks. Sadly, not only are we lacking in quantity of academic talent, but also in quality. India has more than 400 universities and 20000 colleges. Despite being among the largest higher education systems (number of institutions and students enrolled) in the world, only a handful of Indian Institutions are globally recognized. This is a reflection of the quality of academic staff along with other systemic failures in the education system. These alarming statistics provokes us to find answers to questions as to why there is shortfall of faculty? Why the quality of faculty and professors is poor? How to attract the best talent? How to identify and develop the existing talent?

Talent management comes as an effective solution. But majority of the institutions don't offer any form of talent management such as leadership development, coaching, or recognition programs and talent in higher education is neither tracked nor measured at the institutions. This paper attempts to understand the root cause for shortfall of quality faculty in higher education and how talent management can be an effective strategy in attracting, developing and retaining quality faculty.

## SHORTFALL OF GOOD QUALITY FACULTY

A 2016 Gallup survey found that 52% of higher education faculty are not engaged in their work, and 14 percent are actively disengaged. The black and white outcomes from this disconnect?

- 61 percent of institutions have difficulty sourcing top faculty
- 59 percent struggle to retain top faculty
- 27 percent report above average turnover rates for faculty

It's not difficult to agree that the system has failed to attract the best talent to academics. One measure of quality of education offered in a country is the ability to attract the brightest talent into the sector. However, employment trends indicate that academics is no longer a preferred career choice with the large number of students graduating from the country's higher educational institutions.

Global giants like Google and Facebook are increasingly recruiting from India, offering mega salary deals. The best of Indian talent has also been able to successfully integrate itself with top Fortune 500 companies. With industry soaking in the best, the pool of talented individuals available to join academics has steadily declined.

Indian academics has also failed to offer remuneration prospects similar to those being offered by global universities which have also become a destination for some of India's brightest minds.

In India the pride associated with academia has been lost, unlike other countries such as Singapore and Finland which go to great lengths to bestow enormous prestige on those associated with the profession.

### **ABSENCE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Human capital is considered by most to be the driver of successful organizations. While most may acknowledge this, few institutions in higher education have established formal programming to support existing talent (Lynch, 2007). —Higher education is historically an egalitarian culture resistant to formal identification of heirs apparent“Butterfield (2008). In fact, very few studies have been published addressing the talent management strategiesWolverton and Gmelch (2002) confirmed the limited amount of research related to talent management in higher education in which they suggested that few institutions embrace formal developmental programs and leave the growth opportunities to chance instead of relying on a systematic and focused process. Lynch (2007) also suggested that colleges and universities fall short of business and industry in developing their own talent. —One would expect that, in a knowledge economy, the producers of knowledge would value ‘talent management’ and even have a competitive edge in that realm,”Lynch (2007). Lynch (2007) also stated that most institutions perform well in developing their students, but fall short of assisting their managerial staff in their own skill development. Gaither (1998), in illustrating how presidents are often hesitant in providing formal leadership programming stated, —Except among rare individuals, presidents in American higher education tend to avoid management and leadership like a poison ivy petal.”Clunies (2007) suggested that higher education has historically been slow to adopt manycorporate management processes. Finally, Heuer (2003) believed the concept of talent management in higher education is an area that continues to remain largely unexplored. Such comments raise concerns about the lack of attention talent management has been given in the education sector. While many institutions do not appear to be investing in their talent through formal methods, the business sector continues to comprehend the value that colleges and universities provide to their own workforces. In other words, institutions are doing well to serve outside organizations in their training and development needs while limiting such benefits to internal personnel.

### **NEED FOR TALENT MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

A crucial remedial step is to make higher education an attractive destination of career choice. A good talent management strategy would help in achieving this. Administrations in higher education can truly benefit from achievements that talent management has had on organizations within other industries. Despite the notion of wanting to be different from —the business world,” institutions must realize growing talent from within can be of considerable benefit, especially given the current economicclimate, increasingly competitive environment for human capital, and the ongoing need of being accountable to its constituents. Clunies (2007) acknowledged that innovative colleges and universities are examining the value of talent development as a cost effective process to the transitioning of power and authority.

#### *What is Talent Management?*

Talent management focuses broadly on developing high potential employees for future leadership positions across an organization. Furthermore, talent management occurs at multiple levels of the organization and does not limit its scope to senior management positions, a common misperception made by many. In short, talent management looks to establish continuous leadership development which can position an organization to attract highly qualified, external resources while retaining current personnel with significant potential (Christie, 2005).

Gay and Sims (2006) defined talent management as —facilitating the development and career progress of highly talented and skilled individuals in the organization, using formalized procedures, resources, policies, and processes. The talent management process focuses on developing employees and leaders for the future of the organization.”

### **ATTRACTING AND DEVELOPING TOP TALENT**

The global economic slowdown, which has reduced the research budgets, increments in pay and the standards of living, has worked well in favor of India regaining its status in the global education scenario with a section of the Indian Diaspora currently based in Foreign Universities. Pay is a noteworthy consideration, but is not the only factor that can hold top Indian academic talent back to its shores.

Faculty need to be given compensation that is comparable with the best in the country, allowed broad-decision making powers that will have an influence onareas such as course curriculum, student assessment policies, courses offeredetc and faculty should be recognized for outstanding work. The education institutions can attract quality faculty by offering them faculty fellowships, offering research grants and made-to-order research facilities.

Any higher education institution planning to attract and retain talented faculty will need to have a talent management system that aims towards –

- Providinginternational standard training opportunities for the young academic talent
- Providing high profile and reputed professors with research facilitiesand autonomy in academic decision making
- Creating a faculty brand by promoting them as specialists in their respective fields.
- Having a competitiveframework for rewards and recognition for academic achievements
- Developing comprehensive succession plans that ensures the leadership roles by talent from within
- Believing that talent management is an investment and not an expenditure to the institution

## CONCLUSION

Despite higher education's shared interest in building and maintaining a strong talent pool, it is not shown in their actions. There is wide disparity in their interest and implementation of talent management system. The academicians have to believe that talent management in the institutions can really help in identification of the right talent, development of that talent and retaining that talent in the institution for its success and growth. Therefore, managing the available talent will lead to development and growth of the organization. Talent constitutes the prime resource needed to reach the destination laid out in the organizational goals and vision. It can be concluded from the study undertaken that talent management can definitely help in identifying the right talent, developing the available talent based on their skill gaps and retaining the right talent for organization growth and success. Of course tackling the overall crisis would require sweeping changes in the institutional framework by the government, greater partnership with the private education sector as well as greater involvement of the industry.

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