
LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Higher education faces an unprecedented period of accelerating change that is driven by shifts in public attitudes, reductions in the level of public support, questions regarding higher education's priorities, and demands for greater accountability. To respond effectively to the complex educational, social, political and economic concerns of society, higher education must develop a cadre of academic leaders who can engage the institution and its faculty/staff in change and transformation processes. One way to develop this potential is to create institutional leadership development opportunities in which faculty/staff can develop multi-dimensional perspectives, competence to meet the challenges of a constantly changing environment, the ability to think strategically and act collaboratively.

In this paper an analysis has been made to understand the concepts of leadership and management in higher education and problems faced by the leader/manager in developing countries like India.

Keywords: - Leadership Problems, Higher Education, Management in Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

After recording growth rate of around 9 percent for the three consecutive years, India is now considered to be one of the most promising economies of the world. While, higher education gives India an edge in the world economy as evident from the availability of the skilled manpower, and research scholars working abroad, unemployment, illiteracy and relative poverty continue to be the major deterrents to realize her potential in human resources. The prospects and development in the higher education sector in India needs a critical examination in a rapidly globalising world. The government seems to be determined to almost double the gross enrolment rate to 20 percent by 2015. The Government has constituted a Knowledge Commission to suggest measures to alleviate the problems the higher education sector is afflicted with and make India a Knowledge-power in the global economy. But the government is at a crossroad. While there is a need for an expansion of the higher education sector, resource constraint for both the Centre and the states poses challenge to ensure quality education even in the existing institutions without compromising with access and equity poses daunting challenge for the government. Gender-wise and caste-wise discrimination add to the complexities. The government after pursuing neo-liberal policies for the last 17 odd years is keen to open the higher education sector to the private providers, either through public-private participation or foreign direct investment in higher education. While one section is opposed to commodification of education, the other section thinks that involving the private sector is the only way out. How would the higher education sector evolve in response to these challenges is a crucial issue for us to understand and anticipate. How is the sector contemplating changes to engage with the world? These are some of the issues the paper seeks to deal with.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To understand the concept of LEADERSHIP and MANAGEMENT in higher education
- 2) Problems faced by leaders in developing countries

DATA COLLECTION

The data was collected from online journals, books, e-source which helped for the complete in depth study of the topic

Leadership has become one of the fastest growing academic fields in higher education. All the under graduate level begin developing not only individual courses but entire programmes

specifically devoted to the leadership. Even among some of the more established and academic disciplines such as engineering, education and medicine study for leadership. Most of these academic programmes have been designed to be multi disciplinary in nature.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The most important educational goal confronting higher education in the 21st century is to optimize learning by students and by society in general: to educate a growing, increasingly diverse set of learners to be effective and fulfilled as workers and citizens, capable of meeting new challenges they will encounter throughout their lives. To optimize learning means setting forward-looking expectations for universities and colleges, conveying the need to educate graduates for living effectively in a complex world, in terms of personal health as well as financial and social well-being. Optimized learning is that which helps strengthen democratic and civic institutions in the nation. This conception of learning extends beyond the education of students in classrooms to include higher education's impact on societal organizations, businesses, corporations, and valuebased organizations—all made possible by a greatly expanded sense of higher education's educational mission. To optimize learning entails an increased sense of responsibility—within the nation at large, its individual states, and in public and private institutions of higher education—to achieve learning outcomes and meet educational standards that address growing societal needs. For institutions, optimizing learning means taking responsibility for learning and substantially raising the number of those who persist and succeed in programs of education. It means closing gaps in achievement without lowering the bar for results. In many cases succeeding in this challenge will entail rethinking the nature and content of degrees as well as their timing

THE PROBLEM OF CREATIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

There is a saying that if you can define the problem you are well on the way to solving it. Problems are things or states that someone thinks are worthy of attention or investigation. They might be visualized from two very different perspectives. The first sees a problem as an issue that needs to be resolved or rectified, the second that there is an opportunity for something different/better. The problem called 'creativity in higher education' contains both of these perspectives but the most useful way of visualising the 'problem' is to see it as a challenge and an opportunity to change the world of higher education in a way that will make a positive difference to students' lives.

Finding a problem requires someone to be looking for it – people who will own and care enough about the problem to do something about it. One of the aims of building a community or network of interest is to draw together people who are willing to own and care about the problem. In our network building activities through the Imaginative Curriculum project we have encountered many individuals – teachers, staff and educational developers, managers, educational consultants/ advisers, and researchers) who care enough about a problem called ‘creativity in higher education’, to commit their time, energy and minds to trying to understand and work with it.

Our problem is not chronic, in the sense that the vast majority of teachers believe there is an issue to be addressed. It is more of a sense of dissatisfaction with a higher education world that seems, at best, to take creativity for granted, rather than a world that celebrates the contribution that creativity makes to academic achievement and personal well being.

Our intellectual curiosity is aroused by questions like ‘*what does creativity mean to a teacher of history, management or engineering?*’ Our response has been to engage higher education teachers in conversation about creativity, in the belief that it is only through conversation that meanings can be shared and new understandings co-created. Our current perceptions of the problem are outlined below.

- **ANALYTICAL WAYS OF THINKING**

Our problem is not that creativity is absent but that it is omnipresent. That it is taken for granted and subsumed within analytic ways of thinking that dominate the academic intellectual territory. Paradoxically, the core enterprise of research – the production of new knowledge – is generally seen as an objective systematic activity rather than a creative activity that combines, in imaginative ways, objective and more intuitive forms of thinking. The most important argument for higher education to take creativity in students’ learning more seriously is that creativity lies at the heart of learning and performing in any subject-based context and the highest levels of both are often the most creative acts of all. Our problem then becomes one of co-creating this understanding within different disciplinary academic communities.

- **LESS DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND DESIGNING COURSES**

Although teaching and designing courses are widely seen as sites for creativity: teachers’ creativity and creative processes are largely implicit and are rarely publicly acknowledged and celebrated. Teachers are reluctant to recognize and reveal their own creative thinking and actions in the many facets of their

practice. In the UK, the introduction of National Teaching Fellows¹ and institutional teaching fellowships which evidence and publicly reward individual teachers' commitments to teaching and innovation, and the establishment in England of over 70 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning² which reward innovative and effective teaching teams, departments and institutions, is beginning to change this situation but we have a long way to go before the unique creative contributions of every teacher are valued and recognized.

▪ **LESS ROOM FOR CREATIVITY**

Although students are expected to be creative, creativity is rarely an explicit objective of the learning and assessment process (except for a small number of disciplines in the performing and graphic arts). Creativity is inhibited by predictive outcome based course designs, which set out what students will be expected to have learnt with no room for unanticipated or student determined outcomes. Assessment tasks and assessment criteria which limit the possibilities of students' responses, are also significant inhibitors of students' and teachers' creativity.

▪ **NO BOOST IN CREATIVITY LEVELS OF TEACHERS**

For teachers whose motivation derives primarily from their passion for the subject, creativity only has meaning when it is directly associated with the practices and forms of intellectual engagement in their discipline. Many teachers find it hard to translate the generic language and processes of creativity into their subject-specific contexts. Conversely, many higher education teachers have limited knowledge of creative approaches to teaching even within their discipline. Most higher education teachers are unfamiliar with the body of research into creativity and how creative thinking techniques can be used to facilitate problem working. So the problem becomes one of growing awareness and understanding of the meanings of creativity in the discipline and of persuading teachers that teaching for creativity is no more or less than good teaching to achieve particular outcomes in disciplinary learning.

▪ **WEAK CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION**

While many higher education teachers recognize the intrinsic moral value of promoting students' creativity, they baulk at what they perceive as the additional work necessary to successfully implement more creative approaches. Furthermore, any conversation about creativity raises many organizational

barriers and factors that inhibit or stifle attempts to nurture creativity. Paradoxically, for some teachers these barriers are themselves catalysts for creativity.

It is hard to imagine a more difficult set of conditions to work with and academics recognize that they will not make much headway with changing these conditions unless they can influence the behaviours of the organizations in which they work. It is not enough for teachers to overcome such organizational barriers through their own ingenuity and persistence, ultimately, organizational systems and cultures themselves have to be changed. Such changes have to be led through sympathetic, inspiring and energetic leaders. The problem of creativity in higher education is also one of leadership at many different levels.

THE PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

- Is to respond to more competition,
- More scrutiny from inside and outside the academy,
- An uncertain economy and hence diminished public appropriations,
- More demands for increased health benefits,
- Better financial aid,
- Updated technology,

In view of all this , the greatest challenge facing American higher education is to remain focused on what we do best—educating undergraduates, training professionals, and adding to the knowledge base through research and practice.

To achieve this end, collaboration between higher education leaders and public officials provide the most important key to success in advancing a state’s public purpose. The challenge is to proceed beyond agreements in principle—to forge the working partnerships and action strategies that allow a state to make headway on these issues. As one presenter said, “For nearly 30 years, most states have tended to solve short-term budget problems by curtailing their rates of investment in higher education and then allowing institutions to augment their revenues by increasing tuition and fees. The result is that universities and colleges have become market enterprises increasingly dependent on their own ability to compete for student enrollments, research grants, and service contracts to fulfill their own agendas. What public officials need to recognize is that markets reward individuals and enterprises and only very indirectly public purposes. The most difficult question officials must ask themselves is: If a state is not prepared

to allocate the resources it does invest more directly toward the achievement of public purposes, can it realistically expect higher education institutions to include such goals among their own priorities?” We are evolving and clearly, as a board of regents, we need to renew the social compact between higher education and our state. What do Governors and state leaders want back from higher education? Given the pattern of funding, can we provide what is desired? It was often said that education is the glue that holds society together, but the consensus was that the glue is coming apart.

Another challenge and opportunity is the pattern of behavior that is emerging for the baby-boomer generation, and their progeny. Older generations followed a linear progression--from birth to school to marriage-kids-work to retirement—in that order. These predictable life stages were tightly linked to age: people knew exactly what they were supposed to do based on how old they were. Times have changed. We have new challenges in a world economy. Life expectancy has **skyrocketed** to 77, and promises to edge even higher. New generations of highly educated self-reliant men and women are seeking challenges, adventures, relationships and meaning throughout their life, at every age. The idea of living life through a series of age-driven linear life passages is being significantly modified. People now live in cycles, go back to school in their 30’s or 50’s, **change careers often, “unretired” in their sixties**, intertwine protracted leisure time between job cycles, and desire life-long learning. Clearly, there are many opportunities to bring educational experiences to these newer generations as they change jobs, or pursue academic interests later in life.

Another challenge is to determine who will pay the cost of higher education. Students and their families are paying higher tuition than ever, and institutions are subsidizing students at record levels. Even if **state economies** were to rebound to normal levels, higher education would continue to face strong competition for resources from other state-supported programs. It was noted that the cost of health care is going up nationally about 10% per year, and is being made more of a factor in state budgets due to the increasing numbers of elderly. The rapidly escalating costs of Medicaid, more than anything else, explain why total state and local spending for health care is projected to grow faster than spending for higher education. For a variety of reasons, our country also has a very large prison population that is expensive to incarcerate. These increasing demands on state budgets are long-term trends.

State and federal financial aid has not kept pace with the rise in the cost of education. I noted above the reduction in state budget support. In seeking expanded sources of revenue to pursue new opportunities, universities and colleges have helped shift a greater share of the cost of higher education to students and their families, effectively raising the barriers of affordability for many. The amount of student debt is a large factor, as it may determine whether a student stays in the state following graduation, and a student may even avoid a career field due to projected debt levels. We clearly need to address whether some students are not showing up due to the projected cost of education. Our board, as with many others, is faced with the prospect of raising tuition at a time of **greatest economic difficulty** when families, like our state, are having trouble balancing revenue with expenses. One approach to better gauge results is to closely tie tuition with student aid.

There is much written about the cost of education but any answer must account for: (1) Significant societal changes including the advent of the knowledge based global economy, and (2) The growing population in the United States approaching college age. This large growth is concentrated in twenty states, starting with Washington and proceeding down to Oregon, California, across the southern states and then up the coast to Virginia. However, it is mostly concentrated in the southwest. These are also states with child poverty. If these citizens are to have educational opportunities, the overall question of “who pays” must be answered. One solution offered is to treat education like health care, make the user pay. This approach was rejected as it will further increase the disparity in educational opportunity, further “privatize” higher education, and diminish opportunities for our disadvantaged citizens.

CONCLUSION

The leaders and management society in india needs to grow and be stabilised to generate an accelerated growth in education system and Indian Economy. The cultural bondages of people needs to be further strengthened and well rooted for further mushrooming growth.

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