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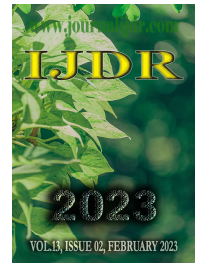
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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMICS : ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE LIGHT OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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ABSTRACT

Learning at higher education level is life long and holds immense potential to contribute in nation's progress and prosperity. New education policy 2020 ushered in major reforms related to policies and practices in teaching, learning and evaluation in higher education institutions with flexibility and freedom to both academics and students. The paper opines that academics in higher education should understand their new roles and responsibility to motivate and guide students to take maximum advantage of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary approaches with any time entry and exit option to learn and relearn new skills in two or more institutions at the same time and also opting both regular and distance mode for different courses in the same program. It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to create a kind of ecosystem where academics leveraging digital prowess makes teaching and learning collaborative and participative and hence the need for training programs for academics so that they have leadership competency along with command on digital based new pedagogy techniques to address new responsibilities and challenges effectively.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions have the potential and responsibility to give impetus to our collective efforts in India achieving sustainable development goals by 2030, becoming a developed economy by 2045, and second largest economy by 2050 and further net zero emissions development by 2070. The quality of higher education holds the key to India becoming a world leader. Those who teach and contribute at secondary level take knowledge and values from higher education instructions. The innovative programs and policies in the new education policy shall provide wider exposure and shall develop entrepreneurial traits in students and they shall be confident and capable enough to test new ideas for providing solutions to myriad socioeconomic problems and in the process creating jobs and wealth which shall give impetus to the mission Atmanirbhar Bharat. Professional development of higher education teacher is sine quo non for effective and efficient implementation of new education policy. Leaderships in higher education at every level need to understand its role and responsibilities in nudging the youths to move away from rote learning to experiential learning. Both academics and students have to collaborate in new cultural that require change in behavior and values as for years they have been using traditional teaching and learning methods. Academic autonomy enshrined in the new policy comes with new challenges, responsibilities and expectations providing ample scope to the institutions to decide what is to be taught and how.

The higher education academics need to redesign new courses for different programs keeping under consideration new challenges and requirements. Students need to be motivated for project based learning and that is possible and effective when academics develops and leverage academia, industry and society linkage. The new cultural of learning survives on new beliefs, values and behavior. That entails academic in higher education need to be trained and retrained to work and contribute in the new culture of continues and collaborative learning. Statistical data of competitive examinations and university results all over the India show a dismal picture which is highly disturbing and has pernicious repercussion reflected in the form of social and economic tension in the country. That is why, the quality of teaching and learning should be at the core at the higher education reforms agencies. In this scenario, where students are becoming passive and indifferent, it is necessary that the methods have to be evolved for fostering quality teaching. The article attempts to discuss flowing issues.

- New roles and responsibilities of Academics in the higher education Institutions
- Need and components of training programs for academics to be effective leaders to address new challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of New Education Policy entails organization change. Organization change involves redefining or revising the

mission statement and change in institution's purpose and strategy in the context of a changing business environment necessitates revising its mission statement (K. Harigopal, 2008). Those who teach or intend to be academics in higher education should be aware of different pedagogy required in higher education classes. It is a supposition that those who qualify National Eligibility Test (NET) for teaching in higher education are fully equipped to teach the post graduate classes. In India, the teaching at post graduate level has not been taken seriously. Majority of the aspirants who join post graduate classes themselves may not know the purpose of higher education at this stage and greater tragedy is that even those who are teaching at post graduate level do not understand the role of research at this stage of higher learning (Krishna Kant & Manoj Shukla, 2013). New education policy has the provision of freedom and flexibility to higher education institutions. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are essential for universities to produce the research and teaching necessary to improve society and the human condition (Sjur, Tony & Ira 2020). Autonomy is not a privilege for higher education. Not only does it bring dividends but it is also a huge duty & responsibility that no higher education institution can handle". (Kronthaler, 1999). The four year undergraduate program promote and involve students in research based learning. The logic of inculcating research aptitude among undergraduates is to instill entrepreneurial intent amongst students through entrepreneurial culture in higher education Institutions. The entrepreneurship education is intended to teach skills in order to produce entrepreneurship (R.H Brockhaus 1992).). The purpose of HEIs not only to inform students about a certain topic but at the same time to shape their lives, their thinking and life styles (Kiziltepe, Zeynep. 2020). Learning communities-group of students and/or teachers who learn collaboratively and build knowledge through intellectual interaction-and judged by increasing students' and teachers 'satisfaction (F Henard & S Leprince, 2008)

Roles and responsibilities of academics in higher education: In the digitalized and globalized world, higher education institutions have the responsibility to train and equip students with new skills so that they contribute in the transition phase of Indian economy on various fronts as it holds tremendous potential of creating green jobs and inclusive harmonious growth. Higher education in India could not deliver dividends as the institution have been controlled, regulated and hobbled by the centralized authority with no flexibility and freedom to reform and program, courses and evaluation practices as per changing requirements. In the twenty first century higher education institution, shall adopt new practices and policies for teaching, learning and evaluation and academics shall have full accountability and responsibility. The way expectations from higher education are changing, it requires the development of academics' teaching skills a priority. Academics in India have not yet understood that teaching in higher education has to be research based otherwise the purpose is lost as is reflected in poor quality of learning at final stage. To keep all students to become critical thinker, creative and innovative, academics as college teachers need a better understanding of teaching and learning issues through innovative pedagogic competencies. It is very necessary on the part of teacher to make the teacher learning process interesting so that students enjoy learning instead of indulging in rote learning. Higher education academics have to communicate effectively the purpose and advantage and new ways of learnings to the student and also to make teaching and learning participative and interesting with active students 'participation and evaluation has to be regular, transparent and with least subjectivity. The new roles require the need for continues professional development programs for academics in the higher education institutions. Academics in higher education need to be more committed, capable and creative and always in learning mode.

Components of Training Program: New Education policy put more responsibility on the higher education institutions to create a kind of eco system where both academics and students find a learning environment which promotes peer to peer learning and the class rooms hours facilitates transfer of new knowledge rather the lectures

on the course content and there exist ample scope to learn by experiments, presentations and discussions. The four year undergraduate course in the new policy is in fact spur and involve students in lifelong continuous learning and relearning. Academic in their new role has to be both a teacher and mentor. Keeping under consideration the new challenges academic need professional development on three key parameters: Core area expertise, Pedagogy skills and Leadership traits.

Core Area Expertise: Higher education academics need to learn, and unlearn and relearn new knowledge for sharing with students new ideas which are of their own making. Students are digitally empowered and they have myriad sources of knowledge. It is the responsibility of institution to provide opportunities and incentives to academics to add to their knowledge base reflected in participation and contribution in research related activities. Higher education sans research shall be unproductive and irreverent. There should be policies and practices where there is provision of both on the job enrichment of the academics and regular participation in refresher courses organized by universities and other eminent institutions. Awareness among faculty that how research informs and inspires teaching and in this way promotion of research teaching linkages. This is misconception and misplaced belief that regular teaching suffers if faculty get involved in research. Involving students in research based learning shall enrich their knowledge base and better understanding.

Pedagogy skills: It should be the sole responsibility of the higher education institutions to impart pedagogical training to new entrants' as well existing faculty. Continuous professional education as teacher should become a requirements for teacher in higher education sector. The four year undergraduate program shall provide wider options and exposure to various courses in the first two years. The class so formed shall have students from different respective streams at the secondary level. The understanding and performance of students in the initial two year in the respective courses shall decide students' future options. The challenge is to adopt such pedagogy technique which is student centric and develops interest even if subject not studied at the secondary level, This multidisciplinary and inter disciplinary approaches have potential to unlock the latent potential in students. Promoting and leveraging experiential learning require new pedagogy skills so that students remain enthusiastic and take interest in collaborative learning. The onus lies on academic to nudge student toward research related activities as there is mandatory project based learning in the third year. During the last decade and particularly in last five years the teaching and learning processes, systems and practices in the college have been transformed from traditional pedagogy methods to student centric methods leveraging information technology tools. Black swan event like the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the potential of digitalization of processes and the college faculty has extensively utilized digital tools and platforms to impart online classes with the keen participation of the students and the syllabus in the respective courses could be completed in time. It is well known that in the years to come the scope of blended learning is bound to increase where both online and offline mode shall be in vogue to impart knowledge and skills.

It is very necessary to enhance and sustain the digital capabilities of teaches. It will keep both the teachers and students involved and motivated. Beside domain knowledge, which is critical for quality teaching, key skills in digital and networked tools is equally crucial for teachers. We have to develop a kind of eco system where our teachers are ahead of the curves in embracing new technology and capabilities and hence need for up-skilling and re-skilling with modern digital pedagogy tools. There is need to focus on building teaches' digital skills capabilities and also softer skills of empathy and compassions so that we are able to and also softer skills of empathy and compassions so that we are able to fulfil our promise of sustaining quality education and our student who suffered so immensely during the pandemic are confident and capable. This will make faculty capable and confident and they will themselves use

digital tools and platforms culminating in inclusive, participative and effective teaching, learning and evaluation. Hence, there is an urgent need to redesign and implement innovative policies to galvanize the teaching fraternity through enhancing their knowledge of innovative digital tools and platforms by arranging experts from IT hub for training in applying digital tools so that faculty are confident enough in using digital tools. Hence, the objective is that the faculty themselves use and apply digital tools in teaching, learning and evaluation without seeking assistance every day because that creates friction and time is lost and students are not able to get benefits of application of IT in Teaching and learning.

Leadership Traits: Academic top headships need to rewrite new vision highlighting new purpose and goals. The programs, policies and practices for different activities need redesigning and restructuring. The challenge for top leadership in the higher education institutions is to communicate effectively the need and benefit of change for nurturing competencies to deal with new challenges in the globalized world. To manage and leverage change effectively with active cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders particularly academics and students shall be the responsibility of top leadership. To work in new cultural of collaborative learning the top leadership has to bring about change in belief, behavior and values. Higher education leadership should recognize and empower the second line of leadership comprising Heads of departments, conveners and coordinators of societies, Deans and controller of examinations and other positions. The academic, administrative and financial autonomy in the new policy entails decentralization of decision making. The responsibility of institution is to train academics for taking of leadership positions at department level and for various committees. Today, entrepreneurship and skill development activities is regarded as one of the important determinants for the industrial growth of a country and it has emerged as dynamic and vibrant area of any growing economy. There is a strong need to motivate and guide the educated youths to enable them to move a step forward and take up a career of self-employment and set up enterprises as an entrepreneur and become job creators in the tight job market. The leaderships at all levels in the institution should have skills to motivate students to start or be apart of entrepreneurial ventures.

CONCLUSION

There is need for reimagining, redesigning and rebooting teaching, learning and evaluation eco systems in the institutions headed by able and visionary leadership. Academia, industry and social institutions must work in tandem to tap new opportunities of freedom and flexibility in higher education for progress and prosperity of nation. Academics in higher education should understand new roles and challenges for motivating youth. Higher education institutions have greater responsibility of creating such an environment where students learn appropriate skills, values and attributes and become lifelong learners.

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