



EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG LECTURERS: INDIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Empowering young lecturers is essential for the sustainable development of academic institutions. This paper examines various aspects of empowerment and highlights the need for comprehensive mentoring programs, comprehensive professional development opportunities, and comprehensive policies to promote diversity and work-life balance. Recognizing and celebrating the achievements of young faculty not only promotes a positive organizational culture but also contributes to their professional development. Providing resources for research activities and establishing leadership development programs are important to give young faculty the skills and confidence they need to make impactful contributions. By addressing administrative challenges through strategic investment in the right talent, we further strengthen our talent foundation. This article focuses on the holistic approach needed to empower young faculty, recognizing that it has a profound impact on the excellence of individual educators and the academic environment as a whole.

KEY WORDS: Lecturers young lecturers, Educational System, empowerment

INTRODUCTION

शिक्षक कभी साधारण नहीं होता. प्रलय और निर्माण उसकी गोद में पलते हैं। - चाणक्य

Education is one of the most important aspects in for development and growth of any country.

Therefore, education in general and higher education in particular need to be given greater importance than ever to nations that want to modernize and advance.

The Kothari Commission, 1966, said, 'Of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the **quality, competence and character** of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant.' The NEP 2020 too exhorts, 'Teachers truly shape the future of our children – and, therefore, the future of our nation', thereby implying that teachers play the most important role in nation-building by creating high-quality human resources in their classrooms.' [Chari, R. (2020, August 30). NEP 2020: Empowering the teacher. *Times of India Blog*.]

In this situation role lecturers becomes more vital as young lecturers offer academia a new point of view. Their enthusiasm, energy, and modern knowledge are crucial ingredients in developing engaging learning environments. Institute should allow young lecturers, the freedom to take the initiative, form their own judgments, and create and apply solutions. But presently, young lecturers are facing challenges like lack of autonomy, discrimination, technological advancement, related restrictions on research and teaching and a result-oriented approach, ignoring the need for an advanced, broad-based curriculum that meets the diverse needs of students. That is why

it is crucial to support the young lecturers in order to (a) Boost work productivity, (b) Enhance students' academic performance, and achievements and by it strengthening our educational system as a whole. Institute should allow young lecturers, the freedom to take the initiative, form their own judgments, and create and apply solutions.

Short and Rinehart (1992) identified teacher empowerment as having six features: (i) Decision making (ii) professional growth; (iii) status; (iv) self-efficacy; (v) autonomy; and (vi) impact. [Neetu & Nancy (2019), Empowerment of Young Lecturers]

CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG LECTURERS

Young lecturers, like all educators, are faced with a range of challenges in their roles. There are challenges that can be both professional and personal. Young lecturers often face common challenges:

- Lack of Autonomy and Representation:** Young Lecturers often face constraints in shaping their curriculum and pursuing research initiatives. Their capacity to bring innovation into their teaching and captivate students may be impeded due to the limited autonomy they have. Furthermore, these Young Lecturers might find themselves excluded from decision-making processes at the departmental or institutional levels. The absence of their input can lead to the development of policies and practices that do not adequately address the specific challenges and requirements they encounter.
- Understanding Changing Technology:** Young Lecturers face diverse technological hurdles in the current educational environment, including limited proficiency in



technology, inadequate access to technological resources, challenges in engaging students in online learning, the need to adapt to swiftly evolving technology, Balancing Technology, pedagogy and disparities in digital access among students.

3. **Lack of research culture:** Young lecturers are required to engage in research alongside their teaching duties. Striking a balance between these dual responsibilities poses a challenge, particularly as they are in the process of building their research portfolios. But frequently face challenges due to the absence of a strong research culture, impeding academic progress. Insufficient support, constrained resources, and a lack of focus on research activities create an environment where scholarly exploration and innovation aren't adequately fostered, thereby affecting the overall academic excellence.
4. **Departmental Politics:** Young lecturers may face political complexities in academia, where career advancement can be influenced by power dynamics, institutional structures, and diverse ideologies within the academic environment.
5. **Work-Life Balance:** Attaining a balance between work and personal life is essential yet frequently difficult for young lecturers. Effectively managing time becomes imperative when handling the demands of teaching, research, and administrative duties simultaneously.
6. **Administrative tasks:** Like their more experienced counterparts, young educators often shoulder administrative duties in addition to their roles in teaching and research. This extra workload has the potential to induce unnecessary stress and draw their attention away from the core responsibilities of teaching and research.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

Young lecturers should receive essential resources, fostering not only their personal professional development but also for contributing to strengthen the entire educational system. Here are some ways to encourage and assist them:

1. **Inclusion:** Institutions of higher learning ought to establish comprehensive policies promoting equality and diversity, eliminating biases that could hinder the progress of young lecturers. Inclusion in decision-making and policy formulation should extend beyond seniority as the sole criterion.
2. **Research Assurances and Skill Development:** Providing young lecturers with research grants and funding enables them to conduct groundbreaking research, contributing to advancements in their field. Institutions should invest in their continual professional development by supporting attendance at workshops and conferences, offering duty leave, and providing resources to enhance both research and instructional skills.
3. **Mentorship Programs:** Mentorship initiatives, where seasoned faculty members offer guidance to young lecturers, can prove highly advantageous. This fosters a sense of inclusion and facilitates knowledge exchange, nurturing a positive relationship between experienced and young lecturers and ultimately reducing internal politics over time.

4. **Work-Life Balance:** Encouraging a healthy work-life balance is crucial to prevent burnout and ensure the long-term well-being of young lecturers, the educational system, society and the nation as a whole because ultimately, healthy people make a healthy nation, whether it be physical health or mental health.
5. **Other Resources:** Institutions should prioritize long-term gains over short-term cost-cutting measures. Rather than burdening young lecturers with administrative duties, institutes should invest in the necessary human resources for such tasks. This approach allows young lecturers to focus on their core responsibilities in teaching and research, fostering overall development of the institute.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Summarise, empowering young lecturers is vital for the thriving and dynamic nature of academic institutions. By addressing the distinctive challenges, they encounter, we can cultivate an educational environment that is more inclusive and innovative. To empower young lecturers, it is crucial to implement thorough mentorship programs and provide abundant opportunities for professional development. Advocating for inclusive policies that champion diversity and work-life balance is essential, along with acknowledging and commemorating the accomplishments of young lecturers. Furthermore, institutions should dedicate resources to research, initiate leadership development programs, and tackle administrative challenges by investing in appropriate human resources.

Essentially, investing in the comprehensive growth of young lecturers not only enhances the abilities of individual educators but also contributes significantly to the overall excellence of the educational system.

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