

# Talent Management in India: A Case Study of Higher Education

Rimjhim Jha

*Assistant Professor, ABS, Amity University Gwalior, India*

Dr Devendra Kumar Pandey

*Assistant Professor, ABS, Amity University Gwalior, India*

Dr Anil Vashisht

*Director, ABS, Amity University Gwalior, India*

## ABSTRACT

*Talent management is a big challenge for higher institutions in India. It is related to attraction, recruitment and retention of faculty. Leveraging and nurturing these assets for continuous growth of the organization is equally important for someone serving in a corporate to someone serving in academics. The excellence of educational sector depends on the kind of people able to enlist and retain of its faculties, it is the faculty that sets the tone of an educational institution to move forward. The hiring of faculty has become a major challenge for higher educational institutions, yet a much bigger challenge is that of a high turnover, since a number of faculty members switch organizations. The sudden loss of these knowledge pool impacts on existing academic plans of organization in a negative manner. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that institutions should design and pursue mechanisms so as to compete well in market place to attract and retain for them the best faculty talent.*

**Keyword:** *Recruitment, Assets; Retention; Talent; Turnover, Selection.*

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## 1. Introduction

Talent management is a big challenge for higher institutions in India. It is related to attraction, recruitment and retention of faculty. The use of the word “talent” has become almost jaded but not quite in the category of academics which is extremely serious and sincere in its true sense because it is not only concerned with the society and country at large but with the entire human civilization. The three pillars of any higher education institution are quality of faculty, infrastructure facilities and learning environment but one of the major issues for higher education is ensuring the continued excellence of its faculty, to continuously improve and compete in the future as the number and diversity of students is increasing, creating an institutional environment that values the recruitment and retention of an excellent and diverse faculty is more important than ever. While most colleges do a good job of developing their students, they are less successful at helping their faculty and staff in improving their skills. Most colleges have in place some mentoring of junior faculty to help them make tenure, but few have fully realized strategies for talent growth and development. A low faculty retention rate creates costly monetary and academic consequences for institutions and academic departments. Monetary consequences include a lost return on a previous investment, the monetary cost of recruiting a replacement, and the time of other faculty diverted to the hiring process.

### 1.1 Impact of Replacement Cost

According to the American Management Association, the biggest cost on turnover is that of replacing an employee who leaves. This cost is calculated conservatively at 30% of an employee's annual salary and for those employees whose skills are in high demand, the cost can rise to two-thirds of their annual salary. However, other studies have found the replacement costs of lost talent to be between 70% and 200% of the lost employee's annual salary. Increasing aggressive recruitment and global demands have made retaining the scarce skills more difficult. The main shortcoming is not only losing key members, but the lost productivity and replacement cost. Very few institutions can afford to employ, train and allow their most valued and talented employees to leave, when it is difficult to find better replacements.

According to a report published in year 2000, for retention of employees organization should follow these strategies:

- Managing people and not retention.
- Having a culture of caring, balanced with a tradition of excellence.
- Never soliciting employee feedback and then ignoring it.
- Keeping an eye on the high performers and rewarding outstanding performance.
- Viewing people management as a strategic management issue.
- Being relentless in pursuit of continuous improvement.

While losing employees is a very costly exercise, the replacement costs incurred include advertising and recruitment expenses, orientation and training of new employees, decreased productivity until the new employee is up to speed and loss of customers who were loyal to the departing employee. Finding, recruiting and training the best employees represent major investment challenges. Once a company has captured talented people, the return on investment requires closing the back door to prevent them from walking out. The key role of human resources development professionals should be to lead the war for talent on behalf of their organizations.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Central aim of the research

To identify the issues and factors related to talent management in higher education which can contribute to the growth and development of the institutions. For the study faculty are being considered as talent. The finding of this study may be helpful for the management of these institutions and the policy makers for developing a more effective and better education system

### 2.2 Methodology

Descriptive research with convenience sampling through non-probability method will be undertaken for conducting the study.

### 2.3 Target source

The data and other relevant information will be collected by deans and other faculty members from six institutions located in Agra-Mathura region.

### 2.4 Implementation

Productive employment is important in achieving a decent living standard, social and economic development, and personal fulfillment. Most higher education institutions, especially professional institutes and colleges are able to develop the needed skills in students for success in the working world, experience shows that the management of upcoming technical and management institutions has failed to be just and fair in the treatment of their faculties. Attempt has been to formulate an approach to prioritize the initiatives that institutions need to take for faculty satisfaction and to attain leadership in higher education through talent management.

## 3. UGC and AICTE norms for Faculty Structure

The knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of staff are aspects which greatly contribute to their own individual effectiveness as well as to institutional performance. In addition to the norms on pattern and structure of staff, guidelines should also emphasize on the process of recruitment, development as well as appraisal. The ratio of Professors to Associate Professors to Assistant Professors in a UG College shall be in the ratio, ordinarily of 1:2:6. The ratio of Professors to Associate Professors and or Assistant Professor in a PG College shall be in the ratio ordinarily of 1:2. This is to provide for situations where the institution may not be able to identify Programmes to ensure appropriate senior faculty at the U.G. level also. The desirable student to teacher ratio for engineering degree program for the model curriculum will be 10:1. However, it should not be allowed to rise beyond 15:1.

### 3.1 Benefits

**Increments:** Each annual increment shall be equivalent to 3% of the sum total of pay in the relevant Pay Band and the AGP as applicable for the stage in the Pay Band. Pay 'fixation formula': The pay 'fixation formula' recommended by 6th Central Pay Commission as accepted by the Central Government shall be adopted for Technical teachers. **Allowances:** Allowances such as Leave Travel Concession, Special Compensatory Allowances, Children's Education Allowance, Transport Allowance, House Rent Allowance, Deputation Allowance, Travelling Allowance, Dearness Allowance, area based Special Compensatory Allowance etc.

**Study Leave:** AICTE shall revise its guidelines in respect of granting study leave with pay for acquiring M. Tech. and Ph.D. in the relevant branch / discipline while in service by relaxing the number of years to be put in after entry while keeping in mind the availability of vacant positions for teachers and other cadres in Technical Institutions, so that a teacher and other cadres entering service without Ph.D. or higher qualification could be encouraged to acquire these qualifications in the relevant disciplines at the earliest rather than at a later stage of the career.

**Sabbatical Leave for Teachers:** To encourage interface between technical education and industry, the Committee recommends that a Faculty member in an Engineering College should be given a sabbatical leave for six months for working in an industry after the completion of six years of teaching. Such leave, however, shall be available to a teacher only twice in his/herteaching career.

**Research Promotion Grant:** AICTE shall prescribe a scheme with appropriate guidelines for providing by way of appropriate 'start up grants' to teachers and other cadres taking up research in all disciplines including basic recommendations of 6\* Central Pay Commission and shall be applicable from 1.09.2008

#### 4. Levels of Talent in Academics

One size fits all also does not apply to the talent management in the academic institutions. There are four levels in the academics for the management of talent. The first level is at the Management levels followed by the Head of Institution's level and the third level which is a combination of faculty, technical staff and students. Every level requires a different set of dexterity to manage the talent. The set of issues, problems, challenges all are different at different levels. Similarly the solutions of all those are also different at different levels. It is also pertinent to mention no level is more important than the other because level is important enough that it could make or mar any academic institute. Undoubtedly talent management is a double-edged sword. If used prudently at all the levels, could give very rich dividend otherwise could spoil a rising star. Present study focuses on management and retention of the first component of third level of talent that is Faculty, the knowledge pool of an academic institute. Talent Management percolates from top to bottom. All the problems of level III is obviously included in the problem-set of level II and level I. But solving the issues at every level the solution also percolates from top to bottom. Solving issues at the level I would automatically take care the issues related to the issues of at level II and level III.

##### 4.1 Head of the Institution in recognition of Talent

The main challenge before the management of the academic institution is the scarcity of talented people who could be made Head of the Institution or Director. As the number of Institutions is rising with a high speed with every passing day, this amount to a monumental task is front of the management. But ultimately one has to be picked up from the available sample.

The main choice lie with the management is to take someone from either industry or academics. The latter happens to the better choice as the person from academics could understand well the psychology of faculty easily which may not be easily understood by someone from the industry. Some of the attributes should be as:

- Should have a vision to take the institution to academic success.
- Should be an academician with administrative experience.
- Should identify himself with the vision, mission and the objectives of the institution.
- Should be a leader in true sense of the word.
- Should be self-driven and a motivator.
- Should lead by example, both in work and deeds.
- If the Director is visionary, he is self-motivated and develops a kind of self-pressure to perform.
- If the Director is not a visionary but is ready to work hard then he needs to be continuously guided by the Governing council to perform, so creating a kind of external pressure to deliver.
- If the Director is neither a visionary nor ready to work hard, no choice lies with management.

#### 4.2 Head of the Institution & Faculty

Good faculty members are invaluable asset to any good academic institution. The entire institute should try to stop them from leaving the institute. Employees leave because they have been pulled away by "more pay" or "better opportunity." Yet, more than 80 percent of employees leave because of the "push" factors related to poor management practices or toxic cultures that drove them out.

The main challenges being faced by Head of Institution regarding faculty members are as follows.

- In the wake of growth of number of institutions it is difficult to find the adequate number of true talent i.e. qualified and experienced faculty.
- Finding a good Head of Institutions is a difficulty, so imagine the situation of finding senior faculty in the ratio of growing number of institutions.
- Inability to attract a good response to job ads, both in terms of quantity and quality.
- Difficulty in motivating the young faculty and to balance the ego-state with senior faculty i.e. with the professors & deans.
- Lack of aggression and proactive-ness which is building among senior faculty members.
- Pyramid structure skewed- to many junior faculty members, with too few teachers in the middle and higher level.
- Limited interaction with industry and external research teams, leading to inadequate exposure and visibility.
- To retain the faculty members.

#### 4.3 Attributes of the Faculty

The good qualities which should be looked for in a faculty by the Head of the Institution are as follows

- Should be qualified and experienced.
- Should have a good academic background.
- Should have command, both in subject and communication.
- Should act as a role model to the students.
- Should be punctual and focused.
- Should understand the roles and responsibilities of a teacher.

- Should be updated and well informed.

#### 4.4 Methodology for Retaining Talent

One methodology which could be followed in retaining of the good faculty members is as follows.

- To do an ABC analysis of the faculty.
- To identify the team of core teachers.
- To find those who are trainable and willing to see the institution as path to success.
- The A graders must be given full recognition in terms of their growth and promotions.
- The B graders can be invested in for the future. They will soon turn into A graders.
- To identify the C grade ones who neither have the necessary skills nor the motivation. There may be a need to hire in excess so that these C graders can be slowly phased out.

#### 5. Findings

- Many people leave their job due to lack of promotion or less opportunity growth. They want to do job for next few years in the same organization only if they found there career development opportunities.
- Autonomy, power, position & involvement in decision making.
- Non competitive salaries represent the most-cited factor in faculty retention, especially among male faculty.
- Lack of research support (financial, library holdings, travel, and graduate research assistants) is the most cited factor in faculty retention cases.
- A sense of professional isolation, including a lack of supportive and friendly colleagues, is an important concern, for both male and female faculty.
- Spouse employment is another factor in faculty retention especially among female faculty.
- In addition to this employees need to know how further reward and progression are linked to performance. This will help to remove any uncertainty as to what is expected of them.
- Their primary career option is academics instead of corporate world as they found their less pressure, good working environment, better facilities, power & position.

#### 6. Steps for Retaining Faculty Talent

- Implement a formal orientation program that's at least three weeks long and includes a thorough overview of every area of the department and an introduction to other departments. As sign a senior staff member to act as a mentor to the new employee throughout the orientation period.
- Employees should be well aware with the policies & procedures of their institution.
- Know the flexible and accommodating policies and programs that apply to faculty, most faculties learn about them from their department chair.



- Now educational institutes are conducted Faculty Development Programs for their employees in order to improve their personality & to shape their career
- In order to retain the faculty in the organization for the achievement of future long term goal .Encourage every employee to learn at least one new thing every week, and one will create a work force that is excited, motivated and committed.
- Motivate and reward staff with pay for performance.
- Outstanding performance should be recognized through salary and other forms of compensation, and also, as appropriate, through opportunities for leadership or for initiatives of special interest to the faculty member and the institution.
- Senior as well as junior faculty should have opportunities to voice concerns and receive feedback through annual or bi-annual meetings with their department chair or the dean or his/her designate.
- Some gifts should be given at the time of one or two festivals to the employees making them feel good and understand that the management is concerned about them.
- Efforts to provide faculty with the flexibility to accommodate and balance the needs of family and work contribute to their productivity, satisfaction and retention
- Get a clear, strategic view of workforce potential, strengths and weaknesses, and special skills.
- Recognizing the necessity for faculty members to acquire new experiences to enrich their teaching and also to provide time for research projects and writing, sabbatical leaves should be granted for: One semester at full salary; or one academic year at one-half of full salary.
- Provision of External Grants Assistance for research and other purposes as a benefit to faculty members.
- Maternity/Paternity Leave for varying periods of time, with or without pay, in connection with the birth or adoption of a child, or placement of a child for foster care.
- Designed to Meet the Specific Talent Management Needs of Educational Institutions

## 7. Conclusion

The success of the most competitive companies throughout the world, including higher education institutions, lies in their highly skilled employees on which these institutions spend millions to retain. Literature reveals the cost of losing best employees to be enormous beyond monetary quantification. Also worth noting is that the loss of one competent employee to a competitor institution strengthens the competitor's advantage. A universal truth "every human being needs to be valued" and same to the employees. Whether it is an employee of any company or of any academic institute, a trained and content faculty can lead the institute to new heights while an opposite one can hamper it badly. Administrations in higher education can truly benefit from achievements that talent management has had on organizations within other industries. Institutions must realize growing talent from within can be of considerable benefit in the current competitive environment for human capital, and the ongoing need of being

accountable to its constituent. So, every resignation saved is every dollar earned and it's the faculty who adds values and shapes the future of the nation by developing talents of the students as the facilitator and mentor for their self growth as well as the growth of the economy.

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