

## Redefining Academic Leadership in Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

Higher education is the key component of skill development in any country. Through the higher education a person gets specialization which makes the person able to work in the specific area and contribute towards the growth of the country or state. For this reason imparting quality education is important for higher educational institutes. In today's age new and different teaching methodologies have been developed in addition to the traditional blackboard teaching which requires a different approach in meeting the utmost quality of education. This requires Redefining Academic Leadership in Higher Education because the traditional style of academic leadership will certainly not work in getting the goals and objectives. In this paper the academic leadership is redefined focusing on its ten ingredients.

**KEYWORDS :** Academic Leadership, Redefine, Education

### Introduction

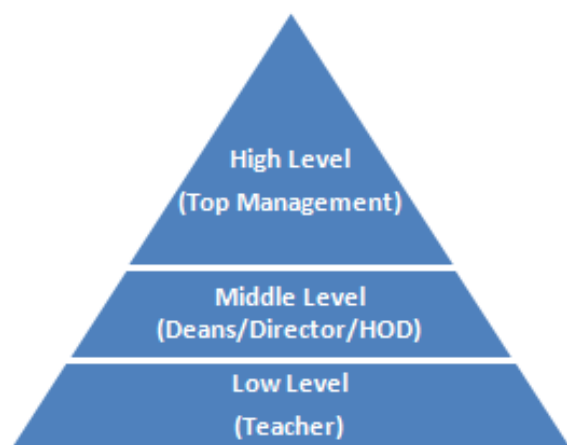
Leadership plays a major role in moving the organization to attain mission and objectives. In the institutes of higher education leadership is important to impart quality education and produce skilled professionals so that they can contribute to the growth of society, region, state and the country. Due to rapid advancements in technology and the way of imparting education the dimensions of academic leadership has changed. There is a need of realizing that the traditional styles of academic leadership will not work in the new educational environment building around and new dimensions and the ingredients of academic leadership must be redefined.

### What is Academic Leadership?

Academic Leadership or Leadership in Education can be defined as the ability to effectively carry out all the academic and administrative tasks, ensuring the quality of education and creating learning and motivating environment for all the members of the institute including students, faculty and staff members [1]. The attributes of academic leadership include personal traits (like confidence, positive attitude, transparency, etc.), managerial skills and academic mentoring. In today's learning environment academic leadership is very important component for an educational institute to achieve its mission and objectives.

### Levels of Academic Leadership

Academic Leadership in an educational organization can be viewed at three levels (Low Level, Middle Level and High Level) as shown in Fig. 1.



**Fig.1: Levels of Academic Leadership**

**Low Level**–At the lowest level a teacher acts as an academic leader and is responsible for driving the students in the right direction. As the students in higher education are to be groomed to become professionals this level of leadership has much importance.

**Middle Level**–This level of academic leadership includes Deans, Directors and HODs who are responsible for implementing the policies effectively and instruct the teachers to act as per the mission and vision of the organization. This level of leadership acts as a bridge between the low level and high level of the leadership in the hierarchy.

**High Level** – This involves Top Level Management of the organization who is responsible for deciding the mission and vision of the educational organization and making policies so that the mission and objectives can be met. At the same time high level academic leaders are also responsible for providing all the infrastructure and resources which are required in an educational institution.

### Need of Redefining Academic Leadership

The educational environment has changed a lot due to the advancements in the teaching methodology and technology. It is important to know about the traditional education system and the advancements in the education.

**Traditional Education System**–The traditional education system was having some drawbacks. It considers and treats every student equally. But all of us know that every individual is different and has different skills, capabilities and weakness. Large group learning is again a drawback, one teacher teaching 50 or 60 students in a classroom. In such scenarios teacher cannot pay attention towards every student. This system is more based on one way communication where a teacher speaks and students listen.

**Advancements in Education**–Besides the blackboard teaching, today new teaching methods have evolved like ICT based teaching, E-Learning etc. which have changed the learning environment. Now students can learn in a more effective manner using the technological advancements. Learning is not limited today.

Due to these advancements academic leadership must be redefined which should match with the new teaching methodologies and learning environment.

### Academic Leadership Redefined

Redefining academic leadership requires inclusion of the ingredients which match with the mission and objectives and the needs of new educational environment. These ten ingredients are shown in Fig. 2, and discussed in detail below.

#### 1. Designing New Programmes & Courses:

This ingredient shows the need of designing programs and courses which match with the need of current industry and market. As institutes of higher education are intended for producing skilled manpower this requires an intensive and appropriate analysis about the advancements in market and industry.



**Fig. 2: Ten Ingredients of Academic Leadership**

### 2. Taking the Right Input:

Once the new courses and programmes are designed the next is to take the students as inputs for these courses. At the time of admission process the objective and requirements of every programme and course must be explained to the students very clearly so that the programme and course has the right input students. Furthermore the admission tests must be designed to assess the suitability of input students against every course.

### 3. Updating the Programme Structure & Course Curriculum:

The programme structure and the course contents must be regularly reviewed and modified keeping in view the changes taking place in technology, industry and the market.

### 4. Nurturing the Students:

Besides the course contents in a programmes the students must be encouraged to participate in different technical events (like workshops and seminars), cultural and sports activities etc. in order to nurture them. This ingredient will lead to the complete personality development of a student.

### 5. Promoting Innovation & Research:

Research is important for any country. The students must be encouraged to innovate with their ideas and thoughts and at the same time they must be involved in research activities.

### 6. Project Based Learning:

Learning through projects is of most importance for the students in higher education as they are prepared as per the industry needs. Students must be given different projects throughout the course so that they learn to work in teams as well as individuals.

### 7. Enhancing Small Group Learning:

In the traditional education system small group learning was missing, but today there is a need to focus on every student and group of students. Furthermore this gives a chance to every student to learn from peers. For this reason small group learning must be enhanced

### 8. Using Different Assessment Methods:

Different assessment methods like quizzes, assignments, presentation, tests, examination must be used to assess the student's performance in the course. The assessment should be formative as well as summative.

### 9. Using ICT:

Today ICT has emerged as an important component of the education system and must be used in every educational institute. Using Smart Classrooms, Learning Management System (LMA), Online Content etc. must be utilized efficiently to impart quality education. In fact, ICT must be used by all the three levels of academic leaders (Fig. 1) in managing different academic and administrative activities in an institute.

### 10. Continuous Process Improvement:

This is the most important ingredient of academic leadership. Doing the things once will not work in meeting the objectives of the institute. The academic leaders at every level must analyze the processes and activities implemented in the institution and try to improve them and at the same time motivating all the members of the institution including students, faculty and staff members to get involved in this process.

### Conclusion

Redefining academic leadership is the need of the hour in the rapidly changing learning environment and the traditional academic leadership style can be transformed to the new academic leadership through Training, Coaching and Mentoring of academic leaders at every level.

This paper has highlighted the need of redefining academic leadership and explained the ingredients which are needed for new educational system and environment. The ten ingredients of academic leadership (Fig. 2) discussed in this paper provides a way for academic leaders to drive their departments, institutes and universities towards achieving the mission and objectives. The work presented in this paper has great importance for academic leaders at every level (Teachers, Deans, Directors, HODs, Vice Chancellors etc.) and the researchers working in the areas of academic leadership.

## REFERENCES

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