

# Academic Staff College Initiatives for Teachers' Development

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India is experiencing a paradigm shift in the role of higher education in national development, particularly in capacity building in the area of research, creativity, development of critical technologies, entrepreneurship, ICT, science and technology and moral leadership. For this higher education system requires trained teachers creative, promising good researchers, IT savvy, effective managers and role models. Therefore in pursuance of the National Policy of Education (1986) and consequent programme of action, the University Grants Commission had launched the scheme of Academic Staff Colleges in 1987 in various universities/ institutions for quality enhancement in higher education through professional development. At the first instance 45 Academic Staff Colleges were set-up in the country for conducting Orientation and Refresher courses for the upgradation of college and university teachers' competence. The number of ASCs in the country has now increased to 56. Presently, these institutions are engaged in holding teacher development programmes in order to upgrade the knowledge, inculcate teaching and managerial skills, and improve the personality of teachers. By the end of November, 2006, the ASCs have organized 10597 Orientation programmes and Refresher courses. In these courses more than 3.40 lac teachers have participated. Recently a special emphasis has been laid on application of ICT in teaching and learning. Besides, other short-term courses for principals and heads of university departments, students and teachers are also organized.

The Academic Staff College of Himachal Pradesh University came into existence in June 1989. It conducted its first Orientation programme in September 1989. Since then, it has vigorously pursued its mission of bringing about educational transformation through teacher development in higher education. For making classroom interaction more effective, the teachers are provided the opportunity of harnessing and enhancing teaching conceptions. It continuously strives to develop a competent, vibrant and morally superior teacher.

## Programmes

The UGC-ASC organizes four types of programmes. In the Orientation Programme the main

emphasis is on the inculcation of certain teaching, research, extension, IT skills and managerial skills and teaching conceptions among the college and university teachers. Teachers are made to realize their role in solving the problems of the society. They are motivated to become self-reliant and competent for shouldering the responsibility of improving the quality of education in the contemporary society.

The second type of programmes organized by the Academic Staff College are Refresher courses. In the refresher courses the teachers are helped to update their subject knowledge, learn new teaching and research methods, and utilize the information technology to understand the developments in their subjects as well as other interrelated areas of study. They are also required to analyze the course contents vis-à-vis the requirements of the society.

The third type of programmes include the conduct of seminars for college Principals. The fundamental purpose of such seminars is to familiarize principals with the usefulness of the academic staff development and emerging paradigms in higher education. The ASC also organizes seminars, lectures, workshops and other training programmes in collaboration with the university and other national/international agencies. It has taken the initiative of conducting training programmes for improving the secretarial and computer skills for the employees of H P University.

By the end of September, 2009, the College has organized 302 programmes (93 Orientation programmes, 208 Refresher courses). In these courses, 9989 teachers (3028 in Orientation Programmes and 6961 in Refresher Courses)

In addition, three Induction Training Programmes each of 3-weeks duration were organized for the training of engineering teachers. Short-term courses and special lectures were also arranged for increasing awareness in different fields such as environment, campus diversity, value education, human rights, etc.

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## Orientation Programmes

The College organizes 4-week Orientation Programmes for enabling the university and college lecturers to:

- ❖ improve their understanding about the society, its requirements and the role of education in its transformation;
- ❖ understand the significance of education in general and higher education particularly, in the global and Indian contexts;
- ❖ examine their role in the realization of national goal of achieving a secular and egalitarian society;
- ❖ acquire and sharpen appropriate teaching skills, knowledge and conceptions;
- ❖ develop an urge for utilizing their resources for the sustained self development;
- ❖ improve their personality by developing the attributes of determination, initiative, approach of thinking, optimism, scientific temper, human values, etc.;
- ❖ understand the organization and management of educational and supportive institutions;
- ❖ utilize the development in information technology for achieving academic excellence.

## Refresher Courses

The Academic Staff College has conducted 208 Refresher Courses in different subjects including Hindi, Commerce, English, Journalism, Chemistry, Management, Laws, Education, Computer, Information Technology, Research Methodology, Environmental Awareness, Human Values, Mathematics, Botany, Zoology, Geography, Political Science, Sanskrit, Human Rights, Music, Physics, Psychology, Sociology, History, Economics, Public Administration and Physical Education. In these courses it strives to upgrade and update the knowledge of teachers in different fields of their specialization. The contents of the courses are carefully selected to enlighten teachers about the contemporary developments in their subjects and also to provide an understanding about the emerging areas of research. During the Refresher courses, the teachers also discuss the syllabi and also share the new additions which have come up in different researches at the global level.

## Seminar for Principals

HPU-ASC conducted three seminars with the objective of exposing principals to the emerging techniques of college management. In a

Workshop of three days, the principals of affiliated colleges were sensitized to the campus diversity issues and

were acquainted with a number of techniques for developing human values for evolving harmonious campus environment.

## Directors Meet

HPU-ASC organized a 3-day meeting of the Directors of All India Academic Staff Colleges in April 1995. It was attended by 40 Directors of ASCs. The meeting was addressed by Prof. Armaity Desai, the then Chairperson, University Grants Commission.

## Status of organized Programmes

The performance of ASC can be analysed under the following headings:

In all 9989 teachers have participated in 302 Orientation and Refresher courses. Out of these 2775 (28%) were women and 7214 (72%) were men and per programme average comes out to be 33 participants.

The teachers who participated in these programmes came from different States and Union Territories of India. The maximum number of participants in Orientation Programmes and Refresher Course upto September 2009 are 2664 (26%) was from Himachal Pradesh. 943 (10%), 1244 (12.15%), 993 (9.69%) and 638 (6.24%) participants came from Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh respectively. Even the teachers from far off states/union territory such as Andaman Nicobar, Orissa, Karnataka, Assam, Goa, West Bengal and Tripura participated in these programmes.

In 93 orientation programmes, 3028 teachers participated. Out of which 847 were women and 1918 were men. The maximum number of teachers belonged to English (387) followed by Commerce (242), Economics (211), Chemistry (251), Political Science (200), Physics (192), Mathematics (121) and Hindi (196). These teachers were from a wide range of subjects.

The distribution of 209 Refresher Courses organized in different subjects was as follows:

Commerce & Management-27, English-12, Chemistry-8, Hindi-13, Bio-Sciences-11, Physics-6, Management-6, History-11, Public Administration-4, Environment-17, Mathematics-5, Computer and IT-11, Education-10, Value Education-6, Music-7 and Law-2. 9989 teachers participated in these programmes. 2775 were women and 7214 were men.

## Components of the Orientation Programmes

The main objective of conducting an Orientation programme is to transform a teacher into a learning, vibrant and creative teacher. It becomes possible only when the ASC identifies the relevant contents and methodology for

this purpose. The UGC has provided broad guidelines for the themes to be covered in the Orientation programmes.

Five major components are:

- ❖ Awareness linkages among Society, Environment, Education.
- ❖ Philosophy of Education, Indian Education System and Pedagogy.
- ❖ Background for enriching Subject Knowledge.
- ❖ Personality Development and Management.
- ❖ Information Technology and Computer Awareness

In the recent years, the UGC has expected ASCs to include discussions on topics such as human rights, distance education, remote sensing and population education. The major thrust of the Orientation programmes has been to make the system of education socially relevant. The ASCs have been given the autonomy to select the contents under each component depending upon the needs of the local community and teachers' expectations and requirements.

The HPU-ASC strongly feels that certain contents are essential to become a professional teacher and must be covered in each programme. Another group of contents is dynamic/eclectic in nature. Its coverage depends upon the situational requirements.

### **Training Technology**

In order to meet required skills, attitudes and values among the participants, a multi-dimensional approach based on the participants' requirements is an essential input for effective training. Therefore, it has evolved certain orientational methodologies based on the entry behaviour of the participants, guidelines of UGC, social problems, emerging trends in the society, etc.

The ASC has adopted a dynamic approach in the development and application of appropriate training techniques. It continuously observes the working of other ASCs, the theoretical foundations of training and development, studies and critically examines feedback received from the participants. It has a package of methods, procedures, exercises and styles for transmitting certain teaching conceptions, judgments, skills and dispositions.

In addition to specific contents and skills, attempts are also made to develop human values. The orientational technology developed so far focuses on the principle of learning by interaction, participation and doing. The spirit of orientational exercises is interactive, contributive and participative in nature.

Main techniques in addition to lecturing, utilized during different programmes, are breaking the ice, teaching game, self introspection, brain storming, brains trust, role

playing, group discussion, fish bowl, workshop, debate, sensitivity training, etc.

### **Resource Persons**

The Academic Staff College works on the philosophy of divulging the participants to diverse fields of knowledge. It considers inter-disciplinary and interactive approach as the basic root for the professional advancement. It associates prominent academicians as well as other eminent persons from as varied fields as tourism, police, administration, journalism, social service, politics, bureaucracy, etc.

### **Reading Material**

The participants of each programme are supplied with adequate and quality reading material in addition to the input provided to them during different formal and informal sessions. The Staff College has developed a package of reading material for the participants of the Orientation programmes. In this package, various articles written by the experienced educationists have been included keeping in mind the coverage of all the components i.e. general awareness, educational technology & philosophy, management & personality development and information technology. Depending upon the requirements of the participants, sometimes books relating to the different components of the course were also given. In certain cases, subscription for *University News* for one year was also given with the objective that teachers remain in constant touch with the latest developments in the field of tertiary education.

The compilation of selected articles and other material was supplied to the participants of the different Refresher courses. Generally, contents in such compilations include the topics of thrust areas. The supplementary readings as well as summary of the talks given by Resource persons were also distributed to the participants. In certain cases computer floppies, audio cassettes and transparencies were also supplied. The video cassettes relating to different topics were also shown for enriching the discussions.

### **Library**

The College has built-up a small but useful library for the use of the participants. It has spent about Rs.7.00 lakh on the purchase of books, periodicals and video-cassettes. It has about 3000 volumes of books and subscribes to 24 periodicals such as *University News*, *Yojana*, *Kurukshetra*, *Man and Development*, *University Today*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Journal of Human Values*, *Management of Change*, *Educational Technology*, *Indian Management*, *Front Line*, *Computer Today*, *India Today*, *Seminar*, *College Post*, *Span*, *The Politics India*, *Journal of Indian Education*, *Progress of Education*, *The*

*Life Positive, Science and Environment Fortnightly, Down to Earth*, etc. The newspapers and journals are also procured as per the requirements of the participants of a particular type of programme.

### **Feedback Mechanism**

ASC has developed an imperial and scientific monitoring and evaluation system. After assessing the requirements of the teachers with the help of entry behaviour test, breaking the ice, warming-up, discussions, know your group exercise, etc., it provides appropriate inputs to the participants. It continues to assess the impact of programme on the cognitive, conative and affective dimensions of teachers' behaviour. A dynamic and creative approach is adopted in the evaluation process. Some of the techniques utilized in the evaluation are think tank, brains trust, multiple quiz, assignments and reports, seminar, preparation of self profile, informal interactions, participants Pre and Post Orientation Assessment, etc.

The performance of Resource persons is assessed on a Performa containing 12 elements on four dimensions i.e. contents, presentation, interaction and class climate designed for this purpose. The participants' feedback is taken periodically. At the end of every programme, the participants give their evaluation about the performance of the ASC on a standardized performa. The analysis is sent to the UGC. The daily evaluation of the programme is done by the participants, which is shown on the chart pasted in the conference room itself.

### **Funds Management**

Cent percent funds are made available by the UGC on fixed norms. The ASC has received Rs.5,54,82,588 as participant cost for conducting Orientation and Refresher courses respectively during the period from June 1989 to September 2009. The equipments and books acquired during the said period are worth Rs.31 lacs. Expenditure on the working expenses has been Rs.26 lacs. The UGC has given grant of Rs.9,12,85,276 so far. In addition to the above grant the ASC has also received a special grant to the tune of Rs. 20 lac during the year 2007-2008 for the establishment of IT lab for the participants of RCs and OPs.

### **Modern Education Gadgets and infrastructure**

The ASC has an impressive infrastructure including two conference rooms, a library room, IT laboratory, EDUSAT, an equipment room and adequate office complex. In order to make training programmes learner-centered, the ASC utilizes modern educational gadgets such as LCD (Video Projector), computers, Internet facilities, audio-visual facilities, conference system, tape-recorder, OHPs, slide projector, computers, etc.

The ASC has set up its own IT-Lab with 24 computers. It has the facility of Internet and INFLIBNET. With the launching of EDUCAT, the ASC can now have two way teleconferencing facility. It does organize interactive sessions with CEC and IGNOU.

### **Publications**

A unique feature of this College is publication of a variety of useful and stimulating reading material to supplement the teacher development programmes. Its publications include *ASC Newsletter, Academe*, and proceedings of each programme and packages of reading material as per the requirements of the programme. The total number of publications of ASC was 313 at the end of September 2009.

**Special Features:** Some of the outstanding features of the ASC-HPU are as under:

#### **A) Dynamic Approach for Target Realization and Coverage of Contents**

The Academic Staff College adopts a dynamic approach in the selection of the contents as well as the implementation of appropriate training techniques for target realization.

#### **B) Operational Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness**

The Academic Staff College has taken the following steps for achieving operational efficiency and cost effectiveness:

- ❖ Involvement of participants in writing, editing and preparation of reports.
- ❖ Use of educational gadgets like LCD, OHP, Slide Projector, audio and visual equipments for effective presentation of educational inputs to the participants.
- ❖ Utilization of computer in managing the records of participants, resource persons, budget and many other aspects relating to training programmes.
- ❖ In view of the shortage of accommodation for the stay of the participants, the ASC has made arrangements with eight private parties for providing accommodation to the participants at cheap rates.
- ❖ Self-directed participative system has been adopted for getting a number of operations completed such as typing of reports, Xeroxing, transportation, serving of refreshment to the participants, etc.

#### **C) Quality Assurance mechanism**

- ❖ Evaluation of Resource persons by the participants in each session and sharing of comments about the performance of the Resource persons is undertaken daily.

- ❖ The participants are encouraged to interact among themselves and with the Resource persons through common lunch, field visits, refreshments, panel discussions, teaching games and exercises.
- ❖ Participants' feedback about the programmes is procured on the UGC's recommended performa.
- ❖ The video cassettes prepared by ASC and other organizations are also shown. The ASC has got a video library having 75 video cassettes.
- ❖ Feedback is also gathered from those who have undergone the training programmes.
- ❖ Providing feedback to the resource persons about their performance at informal level.
- ❖ Pre Orientation Test and Pre Orientation Assessment schedule are administered in the beginning of the Orientation programmes in order to find out the need for improvement in different components of the orientation programmes.
- ❖ A continuous system of evaluating the participants on daily, weekly and programme basis including quiz tests, think tank, brains trust, written test, participation in discussion and presentation is implemented.
- ❖ The contents of the reading materials are revised on the basis of the participants' comments.
- ❖ The assessment of each day's performance is made on a standardized Performa by the participants. The assessment is shown on a graph on day-to-day basis.

#### **D) We are Different from others:**

- ❖ Time bound decisions to execute the work of preparation and supply of the reading material to the participants.
- ❖ Strict observance of core values, quintessence of excellence such as commitment, devotion, punctuality, humility, cooperation and tolerance.
- ❖ Strict adherence to the norms and guidelines of UGC in the conduct of programmes.
- ❖ Providing IT awareness programme to the participants of the refresher courses and the orientation programmes.
- ❖ Adoption of eclectic approach in dealing with the pedagogical problems faced by the teachers at different levels of complexities.
- ❖ For developing tolerance and appreciation for multi-culture of India, cultural shows and cultural evenings are organized.
- ❖ Effective change in learning through practical work and setting personal examples.

- ❖ Adopting participative approach in the conduct of programmes and the running of college.

#### **E) Teacher-Society Linkage**

- ❖ In order to sensitize the participants to the needs and problems of the community, the ASC takes the participants of RCs to the rural settings.
- ❖ The participants are required to complete projects based on the empirical data collected from the community.
- ❖ The participants are taken to museums, zoo, institutes, blind homes and orphanage for getting a first hand exposure to the problems of under privileged sections.
- ❖ The participants of Refresher course in environment organize exhibitions to make the masses aware of the increasing pollution and various measures to control it.
- ❖ The participants' visits to environmentally sensitive areas and seeking their participation in removing environmental pollution.

#### **15.Task for future**

In the near future, the ASC proposes to

1. Ensure quality improvement along with the quantitative increase in the number of programmes.
2. Modernize training package incorporating more use of LCD, EDUSAT, VSAT, INFLIBNET, etc.
3. Collaborate with national and international departments, agencies such as government departments, NGOs, Ford Foundation, Common Wealth Secretariat, etc. for sharing expertise and resources to further improve the organizational excellence.
4. Increase the frequency of publishing its journal 'Academe'.
5. Strengthen the infrastructure particularly providing hostel facilities to the participants.
6. Bring out standardized instruments for monitoring and evaluation of the impact of in-service training.
7. Strive to achieve the status of Nodal Centre for the training of both academic and non-academic staff of colleges/universities.
8. Work out the possibility of starting academic training course for the students who plan to adopt teaching career at higher education level.
9. The ASC plans to utilize its website for online training.
10. It is also decided to bring out ASC News Letter quarterly covering all academic activities.