

Online Faculty Appraisal Report (FAR) in Higher Educational Institutes: An Indian Institute of Teacher Education's Initiative to Strengthen Technology Integration in Faculty's Assessment Process

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Abstract:- The researcher explored the concept of Online Faculty Appraisal Report (Online FAR) in higher educational institutes. Purely qualitative research was used in this study. This investigation was conducted by the voice recording of the Assistant Registrar of the University. The investigator did this by a scheduled interview and subsequently the recording was transcribed in a written form for better understanding of the online FAR. The concept was again verified with the permanent senior faculties and a way found out whether this concept can be presented outside and a publication can be made for it was a matter of internal matter of the university. The study revealed that the new way of assessing a faculty in online mode was found out superior than that of the previous ones of the offline mode. The investigation uncovered that the way teaching faculties should be assessed and evaluated by the experts from across the country to give very important inputs after their observations which can be even from abroad where the teaching faculties be more professionally sound and updated in terms of research field outside their regular syllabus to cover. The online FAR will improve the professionalism with respect to faculty appraisal in the days to come, it will be even more important when faculties are related to the institute to train teacher trainees. The study suggested that Online FAR in higher educational institutes is the correct need of the time and integrating technology ought to be utilized in this area for the improvement of faculty appraisal development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Someone rightly said that an investment in teachers is an investment in students which demands that the expectations must be fulfilled as far as professional standards for a teacher or a faculty is concerned and equally the competencies required from a her to be an expert and the experiences she gains at various stages of her career. Learning is lifelong, The professional standards should be reviewed and revised at highest level with a rigorous empirical analysis of the efficacy of the system. The education policies must be designed everywhere to put the teacher at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the system. Teachers must be constantly updating themselves with the integration of technology in education as a very important part of professional growth (NEP 2020). This is the age of

technology. Every kind of possibility we can see through this age. We saw during the COVID-19 pandemic one-to-many interaction virtually for classroom transactions through Online teaching. We agree or not agree now onwards online teaching-learning is going to be a part of our learning process which hardly anyone had thought about before this pandemic. It will be very hard to forget what we lost during a pandemic but at the same time due to COVID-19, we were forced to look for Online Mobile phone classes globally even throughout India. It is said that the school sectors are the most affected sector by the pandemic (UNICEF 2021). Here, in this article, it is highlighted how teachers were affected and the challenges they faced in their professional growth while staying at home and what is the future on it.

There is a concept of professional growth of the faculty members in higher education. This can be equally true about the professional growth of the school teachers' level for better and quality education. The history of FAR begins on Oct 2019 in IITE as per the authentic information provided by IITE officials in the interview. Its duration has been once after every three months, i.e. quarterly Faculty Appraisal Report. Whenever there was a Faculty Appraisal Report including a self-appraisal report of a faculty member being conducted only the Vice-Chancellor has to be the expert in the first stage, afterwards it needed an expert from outside to physically present along with the eminent personnel of the institution with a technical assistant to help things done technically in the second stage. Now in the third stage connecting more experts in online mode and the professional growth of a faculty member is being assessed critically is a very new concept Getting more than one expert's view on FAR with the presence of all faculty members in one platform called Online FAR initiated by IITE with huge success. IITE technical officials said that the next stage of IITE will be in the global level faculty appraisal assessment. This research article conceptualizes the future of the professional growth of faculty members in an institute in the education sector. Whether an educational institute faculty member or a school teacher his/her appraisal report must be assessed critically encouraging him to grow professionally in the nation-building process. According to PM Mr. Modi if we want to build the nation then we have to focus on the teachers and their training. In this context, IITE Gandhinagar had two recent initiatives under the leadership of the honorable Vice-Chancellor Dr. Patel, Online Oral University Exams for the

teacher trainees, and Online FAR for the faculty members. In order to identify any particular strengths and many areas for development both observation of classroom and leadership practice is important for assessing teachers' performance. This can inform school improvement frequently (Green Hall school 2020). It was basically for the newly appointed faculty members in the Green Hall school in the UK.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A. Meaning of FAR, i.e. faculty appraisal report

A performance appraisal report of a faculty is absolutely more important for continued growth also for employees' professional development. Many items are filled already, and rest the faculty members need to fill. Once it is done the head of the institution has to review along with senior faculties. Then the feedback is given for professional growth. (Delhi IIT website 2021)

The head of the institute can focus on studying the performance of individual faculty. The main reason behind it is to identify not only their strengths, potentials but also their weaknesses. The overall performance of the faculty in each department can be compared with the university-wide faculty level to identify who among all are the good performers and the poor performers and the integration of information technology provides new opportunities to be more responsive to the information needs for employees' professional development in the university. Most educational institutions ignore the technological possibilities to improve administration in the professional growth. (Anido C I 2009)

We have to set a goal if the appraisal process supports a faculty member's achievement and professional development and growth. All appraisal reports are based on objectives being set as per SMART principles. **SMART** stands to help assess the usefulness of the objectives set in annual, half-yearly or quarterly, i.e. the faculty should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable i.e., outcome-based, Relevant and Time-bound.

SPECIFIC means the objectives are clearly defined and well understood by the faculty member and the appraiser as well –The expected work/behaviour and achievement/outcome in precise terms to help the faculty member's growth and development and it helps the appraiser check whether the objective has been achieved with innovation or not, is considered in a specific time frame as the world changes i.e., era of the 21st Century skills.

B. Measurable in Terms of Action Verbs:

Whether the objectives are achieved or not with appropriate evidence, a faculty member can decide by taking care of the suggestions of the previous appraisal report by the experts whether offline or online.

C. Achievable (or attainable) i.e., Outcome-Based:

As per the objectives and their link to different factors within the control of the faculty member is kept under control. This should also take care what a temporary faculty can

achieve compared to a permanent faculty. So, it is an opportunity to grow as a better faculty member for tomorrow.

D. Relevant as Per the Need of 21st CENTURY SKILLS:

The objectives are linked to the institute or department development priorities – but also that they are linked to one's own ethical professional development.

E. Time-Limited (or time-bound):

The objectives have a clear timetable for progress and achievement, with interim milestones where appropriate, to help you assess how you are progressing towards them with how much achieved and what not achieved.

There are no objectives that do not meet these criteria, particularly any that are linked to factors beyond a faculty's control. Other factors that might be beyond control and impact on the ability to meet the objective would include class sizes that increase over the year and the introduction into the class/es during the year of children with special educational needs. Some appraisal policies will refer to 'SMARTER objectives' – with the E and R referring to EVALUATION and RESOURCES. Other appraisal policies may refer to 'SMART+ID objectives. Here, the I and D stand for IMPACT and DIFFERENTIATION. Where this approach is mentioned in the institute policy, one should be vigilant to ensure that any differentiation in an objective setting does not lead to unequal or unfair expectations upon particular faculty members or particular groups of it. The NEU, Northern Ireland 2019 says if you have any particular individual circumstances, which might affect the achievement of your objectives, make sure that you raise these with your appraiser. If, for example, you have recently returned from a period of extended absence, you may require time to readjust to your working environment and need slightly longer to complete particular tasks. The faculty appraisal report and the faculty appraisal pay were sometimes affected due to pandemics which is natural. The process was on monitoring the school teachers present in London (National Education Union report (2019)

The Indian National Council for Teacher Education, (NCTE 2012) says that application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a component in the working of offices to the NCTE to bring transparency and efficiency in the procedure of granting recognition and disposal of appeals has been further strengthened. Teacher is designed at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system in India as per the national education policy 2020. As education is a lifelong process, and at the same time the teacher is regarded as the most important factor in the life of each child. NEP 2020 also sets NPST, i.e., the National Professional Standards for Teachers aiming equal access of all learners to the highest-quality education. Teachers should be well-equipped, passionately trained, and also should be highly qualified, self-motivated and passionate in the field of education- this is what the NPST ensures as far as their standard and professional development is concerned to handle all students irrespective of the different levels of school education. The best talents are never given a scope to be attracted to the profession of school education and that's

something we have to seriously looked into. The NPST rather helps how to determine the qualities of teachers at different levels of their career-road with focusing of NPST on preparing, practicing, and performing for all teachers' improvement. Fundamental principles are accommodated with the standards and related policies as per NEP 2020. This will guide Indian education system. It will certainly support the NEP 2020 vision. Then only a high-quality education to all can be provided and not only that but an education system rooted in Indian ethos that heads directly to transform India, sustainably into a vibrant knowledge society, if it helps providing high-quality education to all.

F. Online Oral Examination an IITE initiative and its future:

This is an IITE initiative to conduct a university semester-end examination during the OMICRON variant of COVID 19 of Jan 2022. Indian Institute of Teacher Education, IITE is known for its integrated teacher education programmes sponsored by the Gujarat state government. There must be hundreds of educational teacher-training institutes all over the country including the RIEs: Bhubaneswar, Bhopal, Mysore, and Ajmer. This online oral examination also opens a very possible door for other institutes in the education field in assessing students in online mode. Not only during pandemics we can initiate proper technical management but also it shows the way to the future prospects of assessment of students of higher educational institutes with the use of technology. In the oral examination, students had the flexibility to choose the questions to be asked orally by pre-planned 10 points for each unit which were distributed to the students before the exam and a particular student had to join online by a link provided by the institute. Six to seven questions to be asked by two faculty members one internal and another external for 30 min duration.

The Journey and history of FAR in Indian Institute of Teacher Education, IITE Gandhinagar began this FAR concept in Oct 2019. It stated the following stages and improvement as follows:

Stage 1: It comprised the presenting faculty member in front of the vice-chancellor. The appraisal system on the basis of their performance.

Stage 2: It comprised of an experts like retired Vice Chancellor from outside university including the faculty member and the institutional dignitaries like the Vice-chancellor, the registrar and one head of the department.

Stage 3: Online FAR, where more than one expert were there online to give valuable suggestions and guidance staying on their own in different locations even experts from abroad.

G. What is the Online Faculty Appraisal Report of the IITE faculty members?

There are a lot of opportunities in education evaluation systems where information technologies, i.e., IT can be used and applied with competitive tools in the decision-making process to provide administrations in delivering basic services. It also helps in designing development plans and programmes of action to address both students' and faculties' needs (McInnis 2002). FAR is the backbone of quality faculty professional growth and critical assessment. Each faculty member has set goals in the last quarter of 3-months and

achieved and what not achieved what they have done out of the box of the regular curriculum, especially in terms of research works and paper presentations in different seminars, conferences, and workshops including news channel interviews or any award awarded as a part of the co-curricular area in the professional growth.

Previously FAR in IITE was comprised by inviting an expert from outside who has to be there for about three to four days morning to evening giving fifteen minutes time to each faculty member to present on the digital screen in a close four-wall corner. The honorable Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar of the university had to be the internal experts including one head of the department. The presentation was over within fifteen minutes and the faculty member had to carry certain suggestions while coming out of the panels seeing another faculty member waiting to go inside once you come out.

As per the information provided by the university assistant registrar, this FAR of 31st March 2022 was the 11th round which was working as a third stage of the FAR cycle. It was something innovative and a new venture in the history of the professional growth of a faculty member of any higher educational institution. It was online FAR. More than 1 expert from outside mostly different Vice-chancellors of very reputed universities including the prestigious IITE Vice-Chancellor in the platform of report presentation and the critical assessment cum suggestion (discussions). Not only experts could join online but also the platform could also allow each and every faculty member of a particular department to connect online to the university link provided one day before and to learn from each other and it was seen as a very great platform to progress professionally, especially in the research area.

Appraisal suggestions as follows:

- What is expected as a faculty member in terms of professional growth in wider contribution
- Which area of the performance has the potential to improve
- What impact has on the institution based on the current performance
- What new thing is done proactively
- What innovation is applied to the co-curricular activities

H. Possible Future of teacher training institutes and the professional growth of the faculty members

Justice Verma's committee report India, 2012 says about the quality teachers and the quality teacher educators within the regulation of the national body in collaboration with NCTE, i.e., the National Council for Teacher Education, In all educational institutes especially the teaching training institutes *skilled teachers can be produced if there are quality faculty members present* and do hard work outside of the box in the context of the research area. Then only we can expect quality education at the grass-root level.

III. CONCLUSION

Now, let's ensure that for all levels of school education teachers are well-equipped and well-supported for growth in their careers by professionally trained, motivated, passionate and highly qualified. As the NCTE made mandatory for online PAR, i.e. performance appraisal report on an online basis from the academic session 2020-21 and in the meantime, the faculties are getting more opportunities through this ONLINE FAR in association with the integration of technology in the education sector assessment process which perhaps hardly imagined before the COVID 19 pandemic. Let us look for other opportunities by exploring more in this area for quality education and professional growth of faculty members with the leadership of visionary educationalists all over India because we have huge experience in terms of human resources in this regard.

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