

## **Teachers' Morale: How Does it Impact Higher Education Quality in Jharkhand (India)?**

Author's Name: Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Sinha

Assistant Professor

University Department of Political Science

Sido Kanhu Murmu University

Dumka 814101 (Jharkhand)

India

### **Abstract**

Higher education shapes the character and career of not only individuals, but it also impacts the shape and status of society, nation and even universe through its concomitant tools like knowledge collection, knowledge dissemination and knowledge creation. Though physical infrastructure does play a significant part in the emergence of higher education institutions (HEIs) to a position of eminence, role of teachers forming part of its system may be described as its engine which ignites it to surge towards its cherished destination. Constituting the core of the learning process conducted in HEIs, teachers' morale assumes significance if HEIs have to traverse towards their goals assuring desirable national as well as global quality parameters to the community. Besides, policy support reflecting in the form of decent pay structure, labs, libraries, and smart class rooms, the most vital factor, which motivates teachers to discharge their duties with greater passion and commitment, is their morale. If diligence is properly recognized in the form of promotion to higher grade in service, morale of teachers is bound to leap upwards. Unfortunately, however, the scenario in the state of Jharkhand (India) manifests utter neglect on this front as even after almost decades of service, teachers find themselves languishing on lower grades not commensurate with their experience and erudition. Low morale of teachers impacts HEIs operational in this state on several parameters of quality assessment. Morale lifting of teachers assumes significance if the institution hopes to carve its appreciable niche in the academic domain.

Key Words: Higher Education, Quality, Teacher, Morale, Promotion

---

## Introduction

The structure, policy and functioning of higher education institutions determines the development status of the economy as well as the society of any nation as it is the structure of the higher education where the youth, responsible for providing momentum to the development process of the nation, to its power and to make the society a better place to dwell, is trained in the various dimensions of existing knowledge divided in various disciplines and is guided in developing their capability to innovate and explore resulting in the advent of new inventions, discoveries and knowledge. Several stakeholders of the university system – teachers, students, parents, university administrators and community- play their part in the realization of these goals of higher education. Higher education institutions (HEIs) assume significance from the fact that rarely a person, without having the advantage of access to the HEIs, manages to create a meaningful identity in any society reflecting in their contributions in their chosen sphere of knowledge and profession. Obviously, the destiny of a nation, its development status, its contribution to the growth of human civilization, overall nature of social harmony and quality of human life depend upon the activities conducted in HEIs by two vital components of stake holders – teachers and students; of course, ably supported, inspired and motivated by the University administration headed by Vice Chancellor and other support staff. No doubt, any study related with the functioning of HEIs and attainment of its cherished goals assumes macro proportions. In this research paper, macro dimension of the area is proposed to be reduced to a micro level by bringing the focus on the morale of University and College teachers working in the state of Jharkhand in India. No institution including HEIs can aspire to grab glorious heights without the full throttled support of its human resources. As efficient and effective functioning of human resources demands its properly boosted morale, their morale assumes utmost significance for goal attainment of HEIs in any part of the nation or universe. Jharkhand is no exception.

## Higher Education Goals

“There is a direct correlation between the progress of a society and the quality of education that is disseminated. Professionals in a society, be it doctors, engineers, lawyers, administrators or for that matter politicians, are the products of the education they received in their formative years.....it ought to be the nation’s collective agenda.” (Prasad, 2006: ii) Dr. Venkata Rao Edara observes that personal development, development of health and development of the economy may be regarded as the salient reasons for choosing higher education. (Edara, 2018) ‘Education performs two dimensional roles in the life of any individual. One, it helps in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Second, it determines our relation with the system; to the economy, politics and culture.’ (Krishna Kumar, 2017)

Similarly, John Harris (2011: p. 3-11) and Christopher Winch (2011: p. 12-27) in their research papers stress the vitality of education in shaping the nature of the society, its development process, its political structure, its civic awareness level. Obviously, education holds tremendous significance in the life of any nation. Higher education is the domain where the task does not remain confined merely to knowledge collection, knowledge dissemination and knowledge creation, but where personalities and characters of the youth are molded under the inspiring mentorship of the erudite teachers paving the way, in the process, of the emergence of a confident, skilled, knowledgeable workforce ready to take the mantle of a nation in their capable hands.

### **Morale**

Morale is indicative of psychological well being of an individual as it motivates as well as energizes her/him to impart full throttled determined and dedicated effort to accelerate the momentum of the process of realization of the goals of his/her organization. While high morale helps in generating positive mind set reflecting in attitude and commitment of the human resources involved in any organization, low morale negatively impacts the human resources behavior and thereby decelerates the pace of its growth. Several scholars have attempted to define the concept of morale. Morale can be described as a feeling, a state of mind, a mental attitude, and an emotional attitude. (Mendel 1987) Hoy and Muskel (1987) define Morale as the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays towards the achievement of individual and group goals in a given situation. In a brilliant study on the impact of teacher morale on educational outcome and job satisfaction, Linda Evans of University of Manchester makes a scholarly attempt to evolve a proper meaning of the concept. Subsequently she empirically analyses the role of leadership, policy making and morale on the overall efficiency of the system. (Evans: 1998) She defines morale “as a state of mind encompassing all the feelings determined by the individual’s anticipation of the extent of satisfaction of those needs which s/he perceives as significantly affecting her/his total work situation.” (Evans, 1998, p. 30) In her another work “Managing to Motivate” (2010), she attempts to present her study before educational managers the outcome of her relentless observation, experience and exploration to make the system better, effective and result oriented. The author correlates the issue of teachers’ morale with applied psychology and in particular, occupational psychology. (p. 1) “If school managers and leaders are to get the best out of teachers they need to understand what kinds of things raise or lower teachers’, morale; what gives them job satisfaction or dissatisfaction; and what motivates or demotivates them.” (Evans, 2010: 1) Another author Anne Bruce comes to similar conclusion when she says that the nature of morale impacts the level of commitment of an individual towards his/her organization. While high morale motivates a person to work with enthusiasm and commitment, low morale dampens the spirit. (Bruce, 2002)

### **Globalization and Quality Concern in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**

Advent of the era of globalization, characterized by principles like free market economy, enhanced level of competition, primacy of consumer satisfaction, and quality service delivery at competitive cost, has made it incumbent on the actors operating in the various sectors of the economy to devise a systematic mechanism of thorough quality assessment of their products/services in order to survive in the market, retain their relevance and ensure a satisfactory growth trend. The model of the economy preferred by the government in the period following independence hinged on 'public sector placed at commanding heights.' In 1991, Congress government headed by P. V. Narsimha Rao displayed boldness in policy making when it ventured into altogether a different terrain and designed policies aiming to transmogrify the hitherto economic policy based on socialist model to market oriented liberal economy bidding adieu in the bargain to the era of 'license, quota, permit raj'. Moreover, this was the period when the entire universe showed definite signs of undergoing radical systemic changes from Soviet Union to its erstwhile partners in Eastern Europe. Democracy's third Wave (Samuel P. Huntington) and End of History (Francis Fukuyama) assumed popularity in the intellectual circles that sought to delineate the nature of the system in transition. Liberal model with varying degrees of openness of the market began to be adopted by one nation after the other in the 1990s. Retreat of state from its gigantic functional domain to its preferred domain in the new era to that of a 'facilitator' meant each institution needed to put serious attention to its efficiency booster plan so that its utility and consequently survival may not be in danger in the changed situation.

As free market norms demanded authentic standard measurement institutions to provide quality standard of products/services to the consumers to help them in making rational choice, several such institutions emerged on the horizon both at the national level as well as the global level. Assessment and gradation of products and services by such institutions determines consumer behavior and makes the task of their selection easier. In fact, ratings by reputed agencies may significantly impact the behavior of investors.

In congruence with this policy, it has been made mandatory for higher education institutions functioning in India to go for accreditation and assessment by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council), an institution established exclusively for the purpose. NAAC has evolved an assessment mechanism based on the performance of higher education institutions on seven parameters – Curricular Aspects; Teaching, Learning and Evaluation; Research, Innovations and Extension; Infrastructure and Learning Resources; Student Support and Progression; Governance, Leadership and Management; Institutional Values and Best Practices.

Higher education institutions strive to move towards the goals of accessibility, massification, equity, quality, innovation and inclusiveness so that enhanced proportion of the people inhabiting the state may become a part of the system. Individuals must get adequate opportunities to participate in the vital functions of knowledge dissemination, knowledge

creation and knowledge acquisition so that the benefits of the system must percolate down to the grass root level.

## **Role of Teachers**

Physical infrastructure in the form of class rooms, libraries, labs, computer labs, language labs, common rooms etc. are definitely essential for the smooth functioning of any education institution. However, human resources hold no less significance. In fact, Tagore thought completely differently as was explicitly visible in Vishwa Bharti, the institution set up by him at Santi Niketan (West Bengal) where erudition and commitment on the part of teachers finding reciprocity in sincerity and quest for knowledge on the part of students was considered the most trustworthy cornerstone of any temple of learning. Infrastructure can never inhibit the process of teaching and learning; if the will is there, learning process may thrive even under the shadow of a tree. Behind the structure of any civilization which we know in history, teachers stood as the cornerstones. Infrastructure in the form of sophisticated equipments, tools and other basic services/raw materials do play their part in the process of the evolution of any civilization, but the force which continuously imparts energy to the system to accelerate with enhanced momentum emanates from the teachers.

Teachers constitute the backbone of the education system. Obviously, their qualification, skill, values, innovative approach and their morale would definitely immensely contribute in shaping the destiny of any society. Open and fair recruitment process based on quota system to ensure the attainment of goals provided in the Constitution of India provides fair opportunities to individuals from various sections of the society to gain entry into the system as a teacher. A teacher is expected to commit himself/herself relentlessly to the task of upgrading previously acquired knowledge with the latest research emerging in a particular discipline. Obviously, besides integrity, passion and commitment to the profession, a teacher must manifest his unfettered proclivity for learning and research. All the new equipments, technologies, curative systems, machines etc are the products of diligence, innovation and commitment of teachers working incessantly in their labs and supervising the research work of passionate researchers.

Teaching has always been labeled as a noble profession just because the persons associated with this profession attach primacy to the impact of their functions on the society, the satisfaction of creation, the pleasure of building personalities and in the process, shaping the lives as well as careers of the youth. Morale of individuals involved in such vital domain of any nation unequivocally assumes tremendous significance if its strides towards greater development is to continue uninterrupted. State on its part has definitely designed policies which ensure decent pay structures for the teaching community; with their pay packets, lives based on self respect and dignity can be within their comfortable reach.

## **Status of Promotion of University and College Teachers in Jharkhand**

Self respect of a teacher demands appreciable working conditions in which their intellect, research instincts, exploratory mindset and effective service delivery may flourish. Though University Grants Commission approved pay structure for University and College teachers gives them ample scope of comfortable living condition, a significant aspect associated with the healthy morale of the teachers in the form of promotion to higher grade in service remains virtually in a state of neglect in Jharkhand. While in developed countries of the world, brilliant academicians enjoy ample opportunities to surge towards the acme of their careers within a reasonable time frame of 10 years, University and College teachers working in the state of Jharkhand fail to reach the highest ladder even after a service of more than 3 decades. The tragic tale of teachers' status is clearly visible from the fact that no teacher appointed in Sido Kanhu Murmu University between 1980 and 1982 has managed to go beyond the grade of Reader in his/her career. Similar is the plight of teachers belonging to this group working in other universities of Jharkhand, which definitely manifests the insignificant degree of priority accorded by the administration to this most vital part of the growth engine of any system. How can one expect the system to deliver resplendent results when the core of the mechanism i.e. the teachers are subjected to such inexplicable demoralization.

Better promotional avenues and service conditions assume lot of significance as they ensure effective as well as productive utilization of resources. A demoralized teacher shorn of self respect and feeling thoroughly bruised at the hands of the system may never possess the concentration and commitment expected of a person willing to carve spectacular niches in academic domain. Academic profession can never be bracketed with any other bureaucratic assignments as it demands relaxed exploratory mind-set to deliver the goods.

### **Hold of Bureaucracy over Promotion Related Matters**

The glaring defect discernible in the present system in Jharkhand lies in the undesirable role assigned to Jharkhand Public Service Commission. A file languishes for months, even years in the corridors of the Commission before a decision is finally taken. Human resource crunch may be the plea put forward by the commission for validating inordinate delay, but the moot question remains: is there any justification behind this defective process of promotion of teachers? Can't the state trust those associated with the academics to discharge this function at the University level? Remember the process devised by the state never comes to a grinding halt, rather it continues to slide at a pedestrian pace reflecting finally in the result. The result, however, clears the backlog of cases of promotion. For example, on the basis of the recommendation of Jharkhand Public Service Commission, 11 teachers working in Sido Kanhu Murmu University have been granted promotion under Career Advancement Scheme from their present grade of Assistant Professor to the grade of Associate Professor in September 2019. Excruciatingly lethargic pace of the system can be explicitly clear from the fact that all the teachers promoted to the higher grade have been promoted from the year 2005/2007. Is this delay in the disposal of such cases explicable? After all, the government will have to release all the monetary benefits in the form of arrears to all these teachers. So

the burden on the state exchequer remains the same, but the effect of such expenditure of hard earned tax payers money loses its sheen as the affected teachers were forced to work during all those years in a demoralized framework of mind impacting to lesser degree or more the quality of their work. This glaring flaw in the system needs to be altered with immediate effect if the system is to surge towards resplendent heights. As delay in service goes against the norm of good governance, similarly delay in granting promotion to teachers militates against such principles.

The job of University and College teachers is not confined to teaching as most others unassociated with academics tend to believe. In addition to discharging their functions in normal class room teaching, teachers have to supervise research, prepare research papers for seminar/symposium, write books and supervise the research work of scholars engaged in research in their departments. All such functions demand their continuous engagement with their profession often intruding into their domestic domain. A teacher is no less than any 24X7 professional, who constantly reads, does research, creates new knowledge and disseminates such knowledge to students as beneficiaries of the system. No civilization, without the relentless efforts of the teachers, could ever have assumed the shape as it ultimately emerged.

In the list of criteria of assessment of higher education institutions devised by the institution especially established for the purpose – National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), there is one specific criterion which intends to extract information and data about the performance and efficiency of teachers working in the HEI seeking to be accredited by NAAC. Criterion number three titled “Research, Innovations and Extension” seeks such data relating to the performance of teachers. Under this criteria, teacher performance indicator specific areas find mention like “*undergoing and completed research projects , Ph. D. degree awarded during the year, research publications and awards, books and chapters in edited volumes, publication citation index, faculty participation in seminars/conferences, extension activities, and collaborations.*” (IQACAQAR\_Guidelines, 17-19)

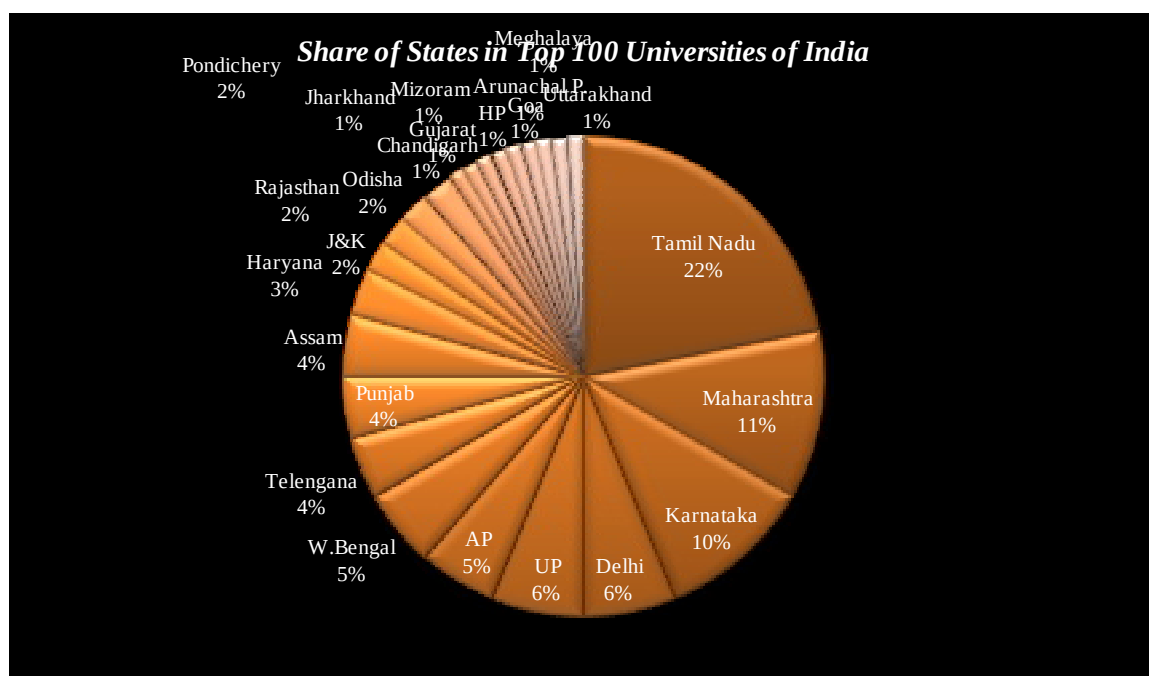
Appreciable performance of the teachers on all these indicators demands not only the availability of proper infrastructure for them, but well thought out motivational policies as well so that their morale takes an upward plunge and they wholeheartedly commit themselves to the task of ensuring decent grades for their institutions. All the infrastructural support available within the campus of HEIs will fail to yield optimum output if the teachers responsible for igniting the spirit of students and research scholars find themselves in the grip of drooping morale. Demoralized teachers can never reach the high point of their capability and intellect.

## **NIRF Ranking**

Morale is the distinguishing factor between teachers functioning in HEIs having well evolved system and those working in HEIs having the disadvantage of lesser evolved system. A look

at the NIRF ranking of top 100 Universities of India may substantiate the point. **(Table 1)** In the list of top 100 Universities of India, a lion's share goes to Tamil Nadu with a whopping number of 21 Universities of the state finding place in the list, followed by 11 Universities from Maharashtra and 10 Universities from Karnataka. It means 42 percent of the total Universities belong to only three states – Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka, the states which have so successfully built a trustworthy brand value of their institutions that their HEIs emerged as preferred destinations from admission seekers from other states as well. While not a single University from Bihar could manage to creep in the list released by NIRF, Jharkhand too could find solace with the inclusion of only one University and that too, a reputed private technical institution – BIT, Mesra.

**Table 1**



### **Better Promotion Incentives Act as Booster**

States, with higher number of Universities in this list of top 100, have devised a definite framework to provide incentive and promotional benefits to the deserving teachers on time. For example, in Tamil Nadu all teachers eligible for promotion under career advancement scheme can submit their application 3 months prior to the date of their eligibility. Obviously, when all the benefits accrue to the eligible manpower on the basis of a well developed system, nobody will ever be under any kind of stress. Rather system oriented functioning of the mechanism will always motivate teachers to work to the best of their ability, fulfill all the

essential qualifications within the stipulated period and work continuously in the direction of creating enhanced quality of knowledge benefitting ultimately the society as well as the nation. No wonder, it is a tribute to the methodical functioning of the education system in a state like Tamil Nadu that students from poverty stricken family backgrounds manage to carve their niches and that too, on a regular basis, within the system as can be seen from the examples of our ex-President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and the latest one being the renowned space scientist and ISRO Chief Dr. N. Sivan. For example, perusal of the copy of letter issued by Registrar, Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu inviting application from eligible teachers for promotion points to the well devised system of promotion as well as timely recognition of hard work. Such a methodical system definitely motivates teachers to put in their best efforts on a sustained basis resulting in spectacular performance of their institutions. (Promotion under UGC-CAS, [www.periyaruniversity.ac.in](http://www.periyaruniversity.ac.in) )

## Conclusion

Too much control in the routine work of promotion assigned to external agencies exacerbated by the decelerating role of bureaucracy in the smooth functioning of the higher education system appears to be the prime factor accountable for below par performance of human resources involved in the functioning of higher education institutions. Promotion is a routine matter. As head of the University, Vice Chancellor should be authorized to constitute a committee involving certain statutory officers of the University and one or two external subjects of the specific discipline of which promotion cases of candidates are to be evaluated and disposed. A system designed by regulatory framework should be put in place which must provide for mandatory meeting of such a committee at regular intervals to examine and dispose of applications seeking promotion to higher grade from faculty members so that a teacher should remain exclusively focused on the task of enhancing his academic credentials, sharing his research/knowledge with the teaching fraternity both within as well as beyond our national frontiers and transmitting such knowledge to his students resulting in acceleration in the momentum of knowledge generating machinery and ultimately, benefiting the society, nation and the world.

University and College teachers working in Jharkhand deserve a better deal. Most of them stand so thoroughly demoralized that their self esteem appears to have been dented. Unceremonious treatment meted out to them easily emanates from their eyes so much so that rarely anyone of them even expects in wildest of imagination to be granted his/her much deserved promotion on time. Teachers working since the last four decades find themselves cooling their heels and appear to be stuck on the rank of Reader. Most of them have retired. Others are destined to retire from service in the same grade. Unless a proper decentralized promotion mechanism is devised and executed imparting adequate weightage to hard work, merit and professionalism; morale of the teachers would continue to droop downwards. Without high morale, no institution including Higher Education Institutions can expect to conquer appreciable heights in their domains. Pathetic performance of HEIs of Jharkhand in

top 100 Universities ranking is a clear pointer and demands transmogrification in the map designed to determine higher education trajectory.

---

## References

1. Bruce, Anne. 2002. Building a High Morale Workplace, New York, McGraw Hill Professional
2. Edara, Venkata Rao. 2018. Higher Education in India: Trends and Future Direction, Amrita Books Pvt. Ltd., India
3. Evans, Linda. 1998. Teacher Morale, Job Satisfaction and Motivation, New Delhi, Sage Publications
4. Evans Linda. 2010. Managing to Motivate, London, Cassell
5. Fukuyam, Francis, 1992. The End of History and the Last Man, New York, Free Press
6. Guidelines for the Creation of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell and Submission of Annual Quality Assurance Report by Accredited Institutions (For Universities), September 2019, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Bangalore
7. Harris, John. 2011. 'Education, Democracy and Development' in K. N. Panikkar (ed.) Emerging Trends in Higher Education in India: Concepts and Practices, Delhi, Pearson Education India
8. Hoy, Wayne K. and Cecil G. Miskel. 1987. Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice, New York, Random House
9. Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press
10. Kumar, Krishna (ed.). 2017. Routledge Handbook of Education in India: Debates, Practices and Policies, Delhi, Taylor & Francis

11. Mendel, Philip Charles. 1987. An Investigation of Factors that Influence Teacher Morale and Satisfaction with Work Conditions, Doctoral Dissertation, Eugene, Oregon Division of Educational Policy and Management, University of Oregon
  12. Prasad, V. S. 2006. Higher Education in India: Quality Perspectives, Hyderabad, ICFAI University Press
  13. Promotion under UGC-CAS, Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu  
[www.periyaruniversity.ac.in/downloads/For Faculty](http://www.periyaruniversity.ac.in/downloads/For_Faculty) downloaded on 16.10.2019::18.30
  14. Table 1 – NIRF Ranking of Top 100 Universities in India, National Institutional Ranking Framework, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India; downloaded from <https://www.nirfindia.org/2019> on 16.10.2019::17.50
  15. Winch, Christopher. 2011. 'Civic Education, Pluralism and the Indispensable Role of the State' in K. M. Panikkar (ed.), Emerging Trends in Higher Education in India: Concepts and Practices, Delhi, Pearson Education India
-