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M M Saxena

Leadership in a University System: Aspirations and Challenges

Lokanath Mishra, Sanchari Bhunia and K Lalrinchhana

Exploring the Perceptions of Stakeholders on Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

Souvik Koner

Role of a Library in the Digital Era

Vinai Kumar Saxena

Serving Humanity: The Noble Path of Medicine

– Convocation Address

Chiranjit Mandal

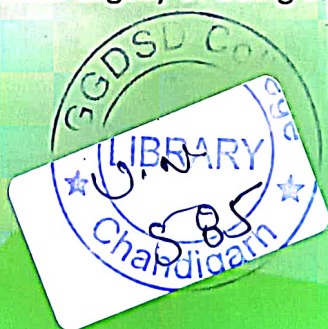
Aligning Higher Education with NEP—2020: The Roadmap for Outcome-based Education

– Student Column

Sanjo Jose

100 Years' Luminous Legacy of being a First Grade College

– Communication



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In This Issue

| ITEMS | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Articles | |
| Leadership in a University System: Aspirations and Challenges | 3 |
| Exploring the Perceptions of Stakeholders on Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education | 5 |
| Role of a Library in the Digital Era | 13 |
| Convocation Address | |
| North Delhi Municipal Corporation Medical College | 17 |
| Campus News | 19 |
| Student Column | |
| Aligning Higher Education with NEP—2020: The Roadmap for Outcome-based Education | 25 |
| Communication | |
| 100 Years' Luminous Legacy of being a First Grade College | 29 |
| Theses of the Month | |
| (Science & Technology) | 32 |
| Advertisement | 37 |

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Leadership in a University System: Aspirations and Challenges

M M Saxena*

Although the leadership literally refers to one's ability to influence and guide followers, in education it is more a role of a manager that is accountable to students, their parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, management and in the public sector to the government. The stakeholders, primary as well as secondary, in an educational organisation are perhaps far greater as compared to any other sector; so is the more responsible role of a leader to satisfy their aspirations. At school and college levels, such responsibility is carried by a Principal and at university level by the Vice Chancellor.

The evolution of leadership is different among different sectors and it mostly emerges out of vast and varied experiences, not too often by chance. Leave aside the Principals of schools and colleges who are mostly promoted by virtue of seniority in their respective service, a Vice Chancellor is selected or nominated from amongst the academicians of high eminence, having a minimum required experience in senior academic positions. He/she is supposed to be one who is expected to uphold the highest integrity and standards of knowledge creation and dissemination within the academic community that he/she leads. While the job profile of a Vice Chancellor demands high levels of academic contributions as well as administrative management of an organisation of higher learning, his/her experience in the latter front is often limited. Most often, the newly appointed Vice Chancellors are not adequately exposed to the training of dealing with administrative and financial responsibilities like bureaucrats who are particularly groomed for the purpose. This is perhaps a big gap that is responsible for the conflicting issues before a Vice Chancellor relating to bureaucratic or secretarial influence, besides pressures from the government or management authority of a university. There is a standard saying that "Ignorance of rules holds no excuse". For a Vice Chancellor, this becomes a far greater challenge as compared to addressing the issues related to the student community or academic matters. To meet the aspirations and challenges of the Government or Governing Bodies on various issues often takes him to a crossroads of decision-making.

It is true that most of the Vice Chancellors, having served for about four decades in College/University organisations, join this position out of their own choice without any compulsion of service rules and there is all freedom to exit at any point of the term of the office. As such, blaming the system to be stressful or uncongenial, may be out of one's own incompetence to handle the situation, holds no merit. The expectations of the society from such a leader of high eminence are not only to manage the diverse situations for the stakeholders, but to take the organisation he leads to the next level of excellence.

Having attained this highest position in academia, one aspires to deliver the best to the cause of excellence, which may reflect in the overall transformation of the institution during the tenure. During a

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