

EDITORIAL

AN EMPOWERED INSTITUTION

It seems that the new technical institutions in Maharashtra started on no-grant basis are under pressure from outside and from within. Externally, the new policy of Accreditation and grading, giving rise to competition amongst the institutions and making them incumbunt to assure minimum expected quality, the demand for the consquent fast changes and limited resources, warrant, immediate action. Internally, there seems to be a simmering discontent, a feeling of betrayal, and letting down amongst the employees even in reputed institutions, leading to strikes in some institutions.

When the private colleges were started, it was hoped that these institutions will provide a better and healthy environment, at least, to the academic staff as compared to the hierarchical government institutions, where the people at the very top plan and think, while the lower levels do the work. However, this hope was soon belied and the institutions fell in the same old rut of pyramidal organization, where employees do not feel excited about their work, where they are supposed to do only what they are asked to do, where nobody says what is on their mind, where everybody is suspicious and nobody is willing to help one.

To face the external and internal pressures, the institutions have to change into an empowered organization.

Empowerment is the new buzzword in the management vocabulary. It is the latest technique of increasing competitiveness and effectiveness leading to more profitability by increasing employee commitment. It is fundamentally a different way of working together. It is a way of achieving a balance between total managerial control and the employee's freedom to act. In an empowered organization, while a high degree of control over quality and resources is exercised centrally, the individual creativity is encouraged to enhance. The employees are made responsible for the results and conditions are created for inviting employees' high commitment to their work.

Certain characteristics can be observed in an empowered organization. Every individual knows where he stands and what is expected of him. Tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined. Morale is very high. There is mutual trust and one is respected as a person. Policies are flexible enough to

accomodate personal needs. People are treated fairly. An individual's place is decided on what he can do and not with whom he is connected. A team spirit is seen every where. Problems are shared and every individual is a party to decisions. Everybody knows what is going on in the organization. Opportunities are given for career development and one can grow and learn along with the organization.

Thus, in short, the structure of the organization, the attitudes and relationships between employees and management get entirely changed. The form of the organization changes from pyramid to circle, where-in a series of coordinating groups or teams are linked to a centre rather than to an apex.

The shift from the pyramid to circle is bound to be an uphill task. The Principal of the institution assumes a king-pin position in bringing out such a change. He has to educate and convince the management to give up traditional power and control over the staff for gaining higher effectiveness, motivation and commitment of staff. On the other side, he has to assure the staff that an individual is empowered to make his own decision and manage himself; that, he will have opportunities for his career development and growth along with the organization.

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