

Leadership Vacuum in Higher Education

Article after article authors are coming up with different opinion, methods, tools, techniques and pedagogies to take the higher education to next level of excellence.

I have gone through more than 200 articles, consisting of wonderful suggestions and plans to improve the classroom experience, to improve the learning curve, to push up the ranking of the institution and so on.

From few months, I was pondering that even after so much of clarity on the best practices, why the things are still the same. I have spoken with different stakeholders at different locations with different perspective.

The Primary reason that comes as the top concern is the leadership of higher education. Most of the leadership belongs to the previous generation when the life was working without internet. Even if they are using all the tools and applications of internet, still they are not able to come up to the level of the new generation. The difference in mind-set is huge to match the aspirations and expectations of this old leadership and young generation.

This old generation will still prefer the students to switch off their mobiles in the classes instead of motivating the teachers to use the mobile apps to enable the teaching learning in the class. This is only an example to cite and may have its own merits and demerits.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to realize the vision and mission of educational entities because there are obvious differences in way different activities of any institution should be executed. Whether it is hiring or promotion or research funding or collaboration or Internationalization or marketing; everything requires a new mind-set to take on the challenges in the digital era. Due to the delay from leadership in understanding these things and slow decision making; some of the institutions with good standing are losing steam.

Current leadership is not able to take the teachers along and is working in vacuum. Teachers are not motivated by their words and sometimes are surprised by their mind-set. Many institutions are just running due to their historical achievements and have nothing to sustain the similar progress in future. Some leaders are working for their personal agendas and are even taking the risk of creating conflicts between different groups, departments or schools.

Solution lies in ceding control to the dynamic, energetic and young leaders who are in their thirties. Most of the top 50 companies are now being run by such young leaders. Why not academic institutions and research institutions. Why there is a mind-set that

the Vice Chancellor/Director or Provost of the institution has to be someone with white hairs and a person who is near to retirement.

I hope that some institutions will ponder and brainstorm over it and try to bring a disruption in their leadership so as to give a chance to young education leaders to bring innovation.