

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

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#### 6.1 Introduction

Higher education plays a significant role in national development by disseminating the specialized knowledge and skills in the society. Not only that, it also contributes towards development of new knowledge and interpretation as well as reinterpretation of old knowledge in the current socio-developmental perspective. In this context, it is the academic staff or the teachers who mainly carry the onus of responsibility to disseminate the knowledge through teaching, generating new knowledge through research and directly linking the knowledge to the community through organizing extensional activities.

The teacher's job in higher education has also become more challenging today especially considering the multifarious roles which he/she has to play like that of an expert, a facilitator, a counsellor, a socializing agent and so on. Teaching itself is a specialized job and the modern pedagogical sciences have proved that it requires both the possession of specialized knowledge and a repertoire of skills to transmit those knowledge in an effective manner. Besides effective communication and subject mastery, good teaching involves the skills of classroom management, skills of establishing and maintaining a healthy and conducive

classroom climate, understanding the student characteristics, organizing the content of teaching as per the established theories of learning, and the skills of using communication boosters, feedback, media and so on.

In the contemporary times the dynamics of knowledge demands the faculty to teach students not the stale content of yesterday or today but to teach them how to learn, how to think critically as well as divergently, how to analyse, synthesize and evaluate informations, how to question and how to articulate ideas clearly and collaborate with others. Similarly the other two major tasks of a teacher at higher education level like, research and extension warrant the possession of both specialized knowledge and appropriate skills. Considering all these points, teacher's job in higher education is stupendous and one will not be able to do justice to this profession unless he/she is meticulously prepared for it.

The meticulous preparation for the job of a teacher at higher education level demands a systematic and rigorous preparatory education programmes besides the normal entry qualification which is usually a Master's degree in the concerned discipline. There is little doubt in this context that a person with the above referred qualification has undergone rigorous training in a particular discipline - essentially in the content of the discipline but he/she may not have been exposed relevantly enough to the ways and

means of the transmission of knowledge to the young minds in such a way that they could absorb it (Yadav et al., 1988). Similarly, the fresh post-graduate may be novice about the rest of the duties and responsibilities of a college or university teacher that require the possession of certain professional knowledge and skills. But a teacher in higher education might profit from some training or orientation had been treated with derision and incredulity not long back. Even today it appears that the teaching community in higher education has not fully endorsed the idea of having a formal professional preparation course.

So far as the history of teacher education in higher education (in India) is concerned, the UEC (1948-49) had officially mooted the idea of educating university teachers in order to improve the higher education system of the country. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) also endorsed the same idea as the commission stated, "the problem of teaching methods in higher education has been a relatively neglected area so far.... it may be examined by the UGC through a special committee.... (and) emphasis would be on reorientation of university teachers to adopt new and improved techniques of teaching and evaluation". The commission further observed, "... suitable form of training and orientation (for teachers) is essential not to overcome their initial teaching troubles and to create a 'sense of confidence' but also to give them a reasonable understanding of educational objective and purpose, the *raison d'etre* and

place of their special subject in the curriculum, of new methods and techniques of teaching and learning, and a knowledge of psychology in which good teaching should be based.... Every university and where possible every college should have regular orientation courses".

Subsequently, the UGC initiated a scheme of summer institute for orientation of junior and fresh lecturers on the method of teaching in the year 1974. Some universities like, Bombay, Calicut, Madras, Madurai etc. also launched some sort of formal courses during 1970s. In this context, a survey conducted by Joshi and Singh (1978) has shown that training of some sort was provided in 18 Indian Universities for their own teaching staff during the late 1970s. But sooner or later these efforts started slowing down due to lack of proper response on the part of the teachers. The movement of providing teacher education to the teachers of higher education again gathered momentum after the announcement of the National Policy on Education, 1986. The NPE - 1986 recommended, "to organize specially designed orientation programme in teaching methodologies, pedagogy and educational psychology, etc. for all new entrants at the level of lecturers".

Acting upon the recommendations of the NPE-1986 the UGC formulated the Academic Staff Orientation Scheme in the year 1987 for the orientation of newly appointed college and university teachers. To implement the above scheme, 48 ASCs

were instituted in different universities throughout India. At present 45 ASCs are in a functional state.

The present study was conceived in the context of the need to understand the suitability and impact of ASOC by eliciting the responses from the beneficiaries and functionaries of ASCs.

## 6.2 Title of the Study

"A Critical Inquiry into the Academic Staff Orientation Scheme (1987) of UGC".

## 6.3 Rationale for the Study

Since the launching of ASOS in late 1987 there were many speculations and mixed reactions in the intellectual circle - some justifying its desirability, some doubting its feasibility, some appreciating its philosophy, some questioning its fundamental theoretical framework and some doubting its efficiency.

There were contradictory empirical facts about the need of orientation (Veeraraghban and Mailk, 1988; and Sharma and Wizarat, 1988). The UGC Review Committee on ASCs (UGC, 1991) also observed that the orientation courses are often conducted in a mechanical manner without taking into account the specific interest of the participants. The progress and success of ASOS again is closely related to the issue of the need of the orientation. Hence, it is important to examine

the exact nature of the need of orientation on the part of the newly appointed lecturers.

Regarding the structure and duration of the orientation course, its components and curricular contents, its organizational approach and climate and its impact on the teachers there were mixed view points as exemplified in the research findings of the studies conducted by Rao et al. (1996), Dhar and Singh (1990), Passi and Pal (1991), Rajmony and Aravanan (1991), Deshpande and Jantli; (1991), Gupta and Budhi (1992), Passi and Pal (1992), Rehman and Biswal (1992), Sharma et al. (1992), Rao (1993), Pal (1993), Passi and Pal (1994) and, Rao and Palsane (1994). Moreover, the findings of such studies were mostly mutually exclusive, and in some causes mutual contradictions were observed. Moreover, the impact of orientation programme on participants' professional behaviour has not been adequately inquired into. From all these angles, a comprehensive study of ASOS:

- to examine the present status of ASOS, the way ASOCs are organized and the progress made so far;
- to analyze the response of participants of the orientation programme and the functionaries of ASCs regarding various aspects of the ASOP; and,
- to study the problems of the participants and the functionaries of ASCs;

is well justified.

The need of the study is further justifiable on the grounds that

- teacher education at higher education level is a least explored area (Singh & Malhotra, 1991);
- no matter how meticulously it is planned, there are always scopes for the further improvement of any scheme and these are to be determined first to suggest measures of improvement; and
- the substantial amount of revenue spent on ASOP when higher education sector is limping with severe resource crunch in recent times.

#### 6.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with following objectives:

- i) To study the progress of ASO scheme with reference to orientation programme.
- ii) To report the current status of ASCs with reference to: infrastructure, human resources, and, finance.
- iii) To study the participants' response regarding the need of orientation,
- iv) To study the suitability of the present model of orientation programme with reference to: its structure and organization; curriculum; instructional process; and, instructional evaluation.
- v) To study the participants' overall perception of the ASOC.
- vi) To study the problems of participant teachers with

reference to: their selection for orientation course and their difficulties during the orientation programme.

- vii) To study the problems faced by the ASCs regarding organization of orientation programmes.
- viii) To study the impact of orientation course on teachers participating in orientation programmes.
- ix) To draw implications about the success of ASOP in the light of the reactions of the directors of ASCs.
- x) To recommend measures for improvement of the ASOP based on responses of the directors of ASCs and the participants.

#### 6.5 Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested to meet the requirements of objective V of the study;

- i) There will be no significant difference in the mean perception scores of the participants of different ASCs.
- ii) There will be no significant difference in the mean perception scores of the participants of Arts, Science and Commerce faculties,
- iii) There will be no significant difference in the mean perception scores of the participants of different levels of qualifications.
- iv) There will be no significant difference in the mean perception scores of male and female participants.

## 6.6 Methodology

### 6.6.1 Research Approach

Descriptive approach was followed in conducting the study in the sense that the investigator tried to describe the total phenomenon of ASOP as it is currently in practice in the ASCs. The inquiry focused on conditions that exist in ASCs, the progress made, opinions that are held, processes that are going on and impact that are evident with regard to ASOP.

### 6.6.2 Sample

Depending upon the different objectives of the study the sample comprised of :

- i) Seven ASCs randomly selected from different parts of India and these were from seven different states;
- ii) Directors of 18 ASCs who responded to a mailed questionnaire including those from the seven ASCs mentioned above;
- iii) Two hundred and forty participants from 16 states who at one time attended the orientation courses in those seven ASCs; and,
- iv) Thirty resource persons who conducted orientation sessions in the same seven ASCs and for the same participants selected in the sample of the study.

Except that of the ASCs all the other units of sample like, the directors, participants and the resource persons

were selected incidentally.

### 6.6.3 Tools Used

The following tools were used for the collection of data from various sources:

- i) A questionnaire-cum-response sheet was used to collect the responses from the directors about the various aspects of ASCs and ASOP.
- ii) A questionnaire-cum-response sheet was used to collect the responses from the participants regarding various aspects of ASOP and ASCs.
- iii) A perception of ASOC scale was used to study the overall perception of the participants regarding ASOC.
- iv) A rating scale was used to collect the response of the resource persons regarding participants behaviour during orientation programme.
- v) A post-orientation reaction questionnaire was used to collect teachers' response regarding the impact of orientation on them after attending orientation course.
- vi) Semi-structured and un-structured interviews were held respectively with the directors and the participants for further in-depth inquiry about various aspects of ASOP and to supplement the data collected through questionnaires.
- vii) The investigator observed the ASCs regarding their resourcefulness and their ways of conducting orientation programme to collect first hand

informations in this context which mostly supplemented the data collected through questionnaires.

It may be noted here that all the tools were prepared by the investigator for exclusive use in the present study. Accordingly, the tools were scrutinized for their reliability and validity by following appropriate methods of tool construction.

#### 6.6.4 Analysis of Data

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were followed in analyzing the data depending upon the nature of data and requirements of the objectives of the study.

Mostly the data were analyzed by categorizing and using descriptive statistics like frequency count and percentages. In case of objective 5 as quantitative measure was taken for the participants' perception of ASOC and the perception scores thus obtained was in interval scale, those were analyzed quantitatively. For the testing of hypotheses both F test and t' test were applied. It may be noted here that statistical (computer) software SPSS PC ++ was used for quantitative analysis of data.

The descriptive informations collected through the open-ended items in the questionnaires and from the interviews were content analyzed, categorized and in some cases also reduced to frequency distribution for

comprehensive reporting. certain statements made by the subjects were also reproduced as it is to highlight its feeling tone without altering its natural appeal otherwise.

### 6.7 Major Findings

1. Total 1015 orientation programmes were conducted and 28,665 teachers participated in the orientation programmes upto April 1994. But these figures were far below the proposed target set for such programmes.
2. Infrastructure-wise, there were both resourceful ASCs and poor ASCs.
3. In many of the ASCs the posts for core academic staff were remaining unoccupied.
4. Financial positions of the ASCs though found to be stable the directors of ASCs were not seemed to be fully satisfied regarding allocation of the funds.
5. Irrespective of their diverse background, 62 percent of the teachers preferred to undergo orientation voluntarily out of their own professional interest, 23 percent of them came to attend orientation programme as it was obligatory and 15 percent of them attended it for both reasons. However, considering their 'levels of qualifications', 'levels of teaching', 'faculty background', 'institutional background', 'teaching experience', 'age', and 'sex', wide variations were observed in their opinion.
6. In general, about 73 percent of the teachers felt the

need of some sort of orientation at the beginning of the career.

7. Regarding the duration of orientation course, majority of the directors of ASCs and participants stated that it is adequate, whereas, there was a pervasive feeling that the course duration should be reduced by a week.
8. Wide variations were observed in the allotment of weightage to the different components of orientation programme in the absence of any concrete policy in this direction. Component A and B were given nearly equal weightage and these were quite higher than those of the component C and D. Component C was often found to be a neglected element.
9. Out of the total 60 topics suggested by the UGC in the curriculum of ASOC, 53 topics were found to be rated as most relevant by majority (i.e. 50 to 90%) of the directors and participants - irrespective of their faculty background. In case of the participants from Commerce faculty, it was found that half of the total number of topics were rated by majority of them as irrelevant.
10. A wide variety of methods were followed to orient the teachers. The most common methods were; lecture, group discussion and seminar. Employing of innovative methods of orientation was found in few ASCs only. However, all the directors reiterated on the inclusion of innovative and interactive methods of orientation.

11. Assignment was a common component of ASOC and a participant had to work upon 3 to 5 assignments depending upon the ASC concerned. Eighty four percent of the participants stated that assignments had practical relevance.
12. There were a variety of practices existing in ASCs about the appraisal of participants. Three ASCs had no system of appraisal. In general, participants were quite critical about any kind of appraisal/assessment during the orientation programme.
13. Seventy percent of the participants in general felt that reading / reference materials supplied to them were adequate. However, the picture was different at individual ASC level. Out of the total seven (ASCs selected in the sample) in case of two ASCs around 50 percent of the participants revealed that reading materials were not sufficient.
14. Regarding the quality of reading materials, about 45 percent of the participants each rated those as quite useful and useful to some extent only, though, wide variations were observed in participants' rating of quality of reading materials at individual ASC level.
15. On the whole nearly 44 percent of the participants rated the organisational climate of orientation course as always democratic and about 46 percent rated it as mostly democratic. However, about 67 percent of the participants of an ASC stated the organizational

climate as authoritative always, and in case of four other ASCs majority of the participants (about 50%-74%) found it as mostly authoritative.

16. Regarding the effectiveness of the communication skills of the resource persons, the participants in general were equally divided in their opinion. Though, variations were observed at individual ASC level. In three ASCs about 60 to 89 percent of the participants rated the communication skills of resource persons as very effective and in other four ASCs about 52 to 74 percent of the participants gave "not so effective" rating to it.
17. Orienting styles of the resource persons were found to be innovative by majority of the participants in three ASCs, in another three ASCs it were found to be not so innovative and in one ASC more than half of the participants found it as traditional.
18. The overall quality of presentation made by the resource persons were rated as good by majority of the participants.
19. The participants' overall perception about the orientation was not good as only a very few of them perceived it as good, while, considerably a large number of them perceived it as poor. Half of them were ambivalent in their perception about ASOC.
20. Participants' perception of ASOC varied significantly from ASC to ASC and considering their faculty

backgrounds, whereas, qualification-wise and sex-wise variations were found to be not significant.

21. During the orientation programme, participants were mainly faced with the problem of completing their assignments due to lack of sufficient reference material in the ASC libraries, difficulty in meaningfully participating in the orientation session without the transcript of the lectures and discussion briefs; problem of adjusting in the sub-standard boarding and lodging facilities at ASCs and difficulty to clarify certain doubts as the resource persons were often unaccessible to them due to many reasons whatsoever.
22. The ASCs had their own problems pertaining to lack of adequate infrastructure, lack of adequate human resources, lack of sufficient fund, lack of proper response from its clientele, (some times) defiant behaviour of the participants, non-availability of competent resource persons at local level and lack of adequate technical support from the sister university and UGC.
23. Twelve(66.6%) out of 18 directors felt that ASOS has succeeded in its endeavour, whereas, the rest (33.4%) stated that the scheme has succeeded only to some extent.
24. There were mixed reactions amongst the teachers (who participated in OP) regarding the impact of orientation

programme. About half of the respondents (teachers) pointed out that orientation courses were inspiring, whereas, for the majority of the teachers, change in their teaching style, writing skills, relationship with students and participation in collective decision making was not significant.

25. There were wide range of suggestions given by the directors and the participants for the improvement of ASOP like: institutionalization of ASCs on a permanent basis; free flowing of funds; modification of curriculum of ASOC; slashing of its duration; and, formulating a concrete policy to make it mandatory for all the new entrants to teaching profession in higher education.

## 6.8 Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

- i) The progress of ASOS is far from satisfactory after nearly a decade of its existence.
- ii) The infrastructural facilities at ASCs are also far from satisfactory and the main reason for such condition is inadequate and untimely allocation of funds.
- iii) Though the majority of the teachers felt the need for orientation, its need is yet to be realised by a sizable number of teachers. In this context, the variations found in the response of different groups of

- teachers could imply that the theory of having a standard or common orientation programme for the teachers of diverse background is unsound. Participants' overall perception of the ASOC which varied significantly considering their faculty backgrounds also indicates the same.
- iv) There were mixed feelings about the duration of orientation course and the feeling was more towards lessening of the duration which otherwise implies that the ASOC is not taken much seriously by the teachers.
  - v) Wide variations observed in ASCs in allotment of weightages to the different components of orientation course suggests the ambiguity and unclarity of the objectives of ASOC.
  - vi) The suggested curriculum for ASCs was found to be suitable but it requires constant modification and updating.
  - vii) In some ASCs participants' dissentment with the supplying of adequate and good quality reading materials, methods of instruction and appraisal system suggests lack of seriousness in the functionaries of ASCs regarding organization of orientation programme.
  - viii) Participants' perception of ASOC was found to be not good in general and the magnitude of problems highlighted by them what they faced during orientation programmes endorse the fact that there were serious anomalies in the organization of orientation

- programmes.
- ix) The impact of orientation course on teachers though encouraging the course needs to focus more upon certain important aspects like, teaching skill, teacher behaviour, writing skills, administrative duties and responsibilities, etc.
  - x) In many ASCs the poor infrastructure, inadequate allocation and irregular flow of funds from UGC, lack of any concrete policy regarding permanent institutionalization of ASCs and clear-cut emphasis on the mandatory requirement of attendance of orientation course on the part of the teachers shows some kind of lackadaisical attitude of the concerned authority in implementing the scheme.

#### **6.9 Implications of the Findings and Recommendations**

The findings of the present study implies that :

- i) The progress of the ASOS in the context of the orientation course needs to be improved.
- ii) The orientation course needs to be further consolidated and concretised by taking into consideration the professional (training) needs of the fresh and newly appointed teachers of colleges and universities.
- iii) Steps should be taken to formalize the professional orientation of teachers in higher education by bringing necessary amendments in the policy regarding selection and induction of teachers into the colleges and

universities.

- iv) Necessary steps should be taken to improve the infrastructural facilities in the ASCS.
- v) Problems regarding allocation and disbursement of funds needs to be urgently sort out.
- vi) Clear instructions should be send to the institutions of higher education regarding the ASOS.
- vii) Urgent steps should be taken to materialize the suggestion given by the UGC Review Committee on ASCs regarding the establishment of Consortium ASCs to have a sort of networking and exchange of ideas and technical know-how among the ASCs.
- viii) There should be regular data based monitoring of the implementations of ASOS.
- ix) Impact of the orientation programme should be closely studied by the ASCs in their own region to understand the gap if any exists in the orientation inputs provided and their implementational feasibility.
- x) A close nexus should be established between the beneficiary institutions and the ASCs and there should be regular exchanges of ideas to make the orientation course more effective and to design alternative models of orientation and follow up programmes.

#### **6.10 Suggestion for further Research**

In the perspective of the present study the researcher suggests the following studies which could be taken up in

this area :

- i) Cross sectional study of the orientational need of the college and university teachers involving a large sample.
- ii) Longitudinal study on the impact of orientation course on the teachers who have attended the orientation programmes.
- iii) Developing and trying out of alternative models of orientation course and studying their impact.
- iv) Status study on the refresher courses.
- v) Impact study on the refresher courses.
- vi) Meta-analysis of the research studies conducted so far in this area.