

# Professional Development of Administrative Officers at YCMOU Nashik : An Approach

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## Introduction

Maharashtra has a long and rich tradition of educational reforms. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Dr Panjabrao Deshmukh, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, Bhaurao Patil, Swami Ramanand Teerth and other great thinkers and reformers have contributed to educational philosophy and movement in the state. It was therefore, appropriate that the state realized the need of an Open University. The university was established on 1st July 1989 through an Act XX of 1989 of the Maharashtra State Legislature, justly named after Yashwantrao Chavan, a great political leader and builder of modern Maharashtra. The Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) has its headquarter at Nashik, a city 200 kilometers north of Mumbai in India.

The university has accepted application of Multimedia for achieving the target of need based mass education and so, a mass varsity in its shape and functions. This target has increased the responsibility of university administrative officers, because a wide variety of population has become target group of this university. The scheduled tribes and poor persons from remote corners of Maharashtra state can not be provided their educational opportunities as per their need, aptitude, environment around them by conventional system of education. This has on one side explored a wide possibility of much expansion of university activities, but on the other side it has increased different types of responsibilities of university employees particularly of the Administrative officers.

## Objects of YCMOU

- *To make higher, vocational and technical education available to large sections of the population.*
- *To give special attention to the needs of the disadvantages groups, in particular the people in the rural areas and the women.*
- *To relate all courses to the developmental needs of individuals, institutions and the state.*

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- *To provide innovative, flexible and open system of education by using distance teaching methodology and by applying modern communication technologies to education.*
- *To provide continuing adult and extension education. Special attention is to be given to retraining adults in new skills and, to enable them to adjust to a changing technological environment.*
- *To provide for post-graduate studies and research opportunities in all fields of knowledge especially in Educational Technology, Distance Education and Developmental Communications.*

### **Main Features of the University**

- i) The goal of the university is to become a Mass Varsity. The programmes are therefore conceptualised and designed with this goal in sight.
- ii) Most of the programmes are offered in the regional language (Marathi).
- iii) The programmes lay major emphases on vocational/technical courses.
- iv) The university is committed to becoming self-sufficient in operational costs.
- v) The university aims at using the latest techniques and technologies in its task of imparting education.
- vi) The university develops linkages so as to become instrumental in the developmental and transformational processes of the society around.
- vii) The university has evolved a work culture in its organization in which accountability rather than authority is the key feature of each post.
- viii) The structure, functioning and philosophy of the university is different from conventional universities. It has relaxed entry rules, flexibility in course combination. Flexibility in choosing the courses and pace of study, provision of individualized study etc.

### **Organisational Structure**

The structure of the university has to be appropriate to the functions generated to fulfil the aims and objectives. Besides, the structure and functions, the Open University should allow efficient and cost effective decision making, quick implementation and at the same time be accountable and open to change. The YCMOU act therefore, provides for a minimum structure for evolving an innovative, non-formal Open University System. The Governor of the State is the Chancellor of the University. The Board of Management, Academic Council, Planning Board and the Finance Committee are the important bodies to take decision. The Academic activities

fall under the schools of studies in various disciplines. School Councils have been established for guiding the schools in developing various programmes.

The Vice-Chancellor, Directors, the Registrar and the Finance Officer are the main officers of the University. The organizational structure of the University is as under :

### **Organisational Structure of YCMOU**

<b>Chancellor</b>				
Finance Committee	Academic Council	Board of Management	Planning Board	
<b>Vice-Chancellor</b>				
Academic Division	Print Production Centre	Student Services Division	Planning & Coordination Division	Computer Centre
Academic Services Division	Audio Visual Centre	Infrastructural Services Division	Finance Division	Library & Resource Centre

### **Functions of Administrative Officers**

The university has completed its 11 years of time span and during this period it has covered a large number of students (about one Lac) through out Maharashtra State for different programmes. In order to make the University a mass varsity, the first function of every administrative staff is to develop an awareness of open learning system and its utility among those, who are not acquainted with it. The second function is to treat every learner as a customer and our learning material as our product. For this purpose, the administrative staff has to review their duties, responsibilities by using their powers in meeting the learner needs. The learners are at a distance from the system as well as from fellow learners. Under the circumstances, their sincere care for meeting academic and non-academic needs is very essential.

Human relation is third important need among the administrative officers. This Human relation is that mobile oil, which reduces friction between and among the staff members as well as with the students also. The students are at the centre and are our customers too. Their satisfaction is primary goal of the university. A constant touch with them and their problems as well as the solution is very essential for every Administrative officer. The fourth important function of every Administrative Officer is to work in right direction with minimum support from others in order to avoid delay in work. This is possible when a person has a strong positive "Attitude" towards

work. It will compel the administrative officer to work with full dedication for meeting the job requirements. The computer has become a strong need in every field. It can serve the mankind in the way we require to tame and use it. In distance education, issuing letters of wide variety to students, collection of feedback from them and providing feedback to them will be possible easily, only with the help of computers in present day scenario. Meeting learner demands through Internet, E-mail and sending feedback for their academic and non-academic needs by generating two way fast communication is possible with the help of computer. Therefore, fifth function of every Administrative officer is to operate computers themselves as and when needed.

The system of distance education is quite different than conventional system. Therefore, the knowledge of Distance Education, meaning of openness, implementation of androgogy at each and every stage of the system is very essential. The Administrative Officers must learn these concepts and should make their subordinates to learn these concepts so that the system may function in a desired way. The university has at present, Acting Registrar, 2 Deputy Registrars, 5 Assistant Registrars and 3 Section officers, 3 Assistant Section Officers, 8 Regional Directors in the name of Administrative staff. They have come either from different administrative sides or teaching side. It is essential to prepare learning material in Print {SIM} format, Audio, Video and some Human support for meeting these functions.

### **Training Needs of Administrative Officers**

There are wide range of training needs of different categories which can be classified as follows :

1. The Administrator likes Registrar and the officers who are recruited from outside system need Professional training in Policy, Administration and Managerial skills Evaluation, Quality assurance and Financial matters.
2. Finance officers, Controller of Exam, Librarian, Estate Managers, Planning officers, Security officer etc. who are drawn from different backgrounds need specialised training in skills specially related to the performance of their tasks.
3. Regional Directors need skills in planning and management, staff appraisal, research, management, human relations, financial management etc.
4. Middle level functionaries of the rank of Deputy Registrars and Assistant Registrars, who are normally promoted, require re-training to broaden the outlook and acquire knowledge and skills necessary to discharge various responsibilities and to take important decisions.
5. Subordinate and clerical staff requires orientation and training in office procedure,

word processing, noting, drafting, motivation, behavioral aspects, record management etc. This training can be imparted by Administrative Officers of the University if they are properly trained at first.

6. Most of the university officers do not possess training in law to deal with legal problems, litigation interpretation of statute, ordinances and basic acts of the universities. Laws are often applied mechanically without recognition of human aspects involved. Consequently, the University is now involved in a large number of court cases, litigation relating to student's matters, teacher's affairs and service matters etc.
7. Many a time senior teachers in the university and college system are elevated to administrative positions without any prior experience or exposure to administration. Similarly many of the officers who are promoted from subordinate staff and clerical staff, senior administrative officers are not sufficiently aware of the history and philosophy of university development and policy issues involved with Open Learning System which they are supposed to handle. The committee work on recording of minutes of statutory bodies is another area, which demands for professional training to handle these matters efficiently and effectively.
8. The information technology is prevailing in all spheres of life including university administration. However, our university officials are not properly equipped and trained to utilise the modern technology for effective and efficient use in the administration.
9. The Regional Directors require some training regarding mobilisation of local resources at study centers for learning. It will help the university in reducing study center expenditure for managing teaching learning aids for students.
10. The concept of management has been adopted in every field and so in Distance education too. Systems approach is that science which helps in analysing any incident, situation, problem into its fine components, and thus, in diagnosing the problem and its location. The knowledge of Systems Approach would help the Administrative officers in sorting out the problems and their location, as well as, in deciding an appropriate solution at an earliest. The training programme to be developed for these Administrative officers must include the concept of 'Management' and 'Systems Approach' too.

### **Methodology to be Adopted**

Various training programmes, workshops, seminars should be organised from time to time in which university administrators from various open universities of India may participate and exchange their views and experiences. These groups may

not necessarily be homogenous but heterogeneous. It will be of immense utility, if administrators like, Directors, Registrars, Finance Officers and Controller of Exams, share their experiences and difficulties in such workshops and seminars. The university administrators may be provided opportunities to visit Open Universities within the country and abroad. For this purpose, Annual Conference of university administrators should be organised on regular basis where they can discuss the role of university administrators in the context of changing needs.

### **Conclusion**

The Open University system throughout world is facing three big challenges, as (1) Openness and (2) Acceptance of Androgogy, and (3) Quality Control. The openness does not mean only learning at one's own rate, pace and time, but also a freedom to the learner for selecting a learning strategy of his own choice. Androgogy advocates the involvement of learners at each and every stage of the process. The Quality Control is systematic analysis of whole system and its activities for diagnosing weak points and thus giving strength in order to make system as per the needs of the learners. These three objectives can be successfully achieved only when the staff is properly skilled in dealing with the learners who are our customers and are at the centre of the whole process. This requires continuous short term and long term training courses through networking among various open universities. The Distance Education Council, New Delhi may take up initiatives in this regard.

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