# EFFECT OF JOB CONSTRAINTS ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ODL FACULTY

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher is a back bone of education system. This fact cannot be denied that the teacher occupies the most crucial position in the entire spectrum of educational activities. It is therefore, almost important that any reforms to be introduced for widening the base of education, improving the content and teaching learning process, should focus on the effective status of teacher. The research was conducted to study the job constraints of AIOU (Allama Iqbal Open University) faculty members and its effects on their profession development and to suggest strategies to improve the attitudes of academicians towards the professional development. The study was delimited to faculty members of AIOU. Total population was 137 out of which 70% was randomly selected as sample and it was 90 (50 male and 40 female). A questionnaire with 5 point likert scale was developed with the consultancy of education experts. The data was collected and analyzed through Mean and percentages. On the basis of data analysis conclusion and recommendations were made. The conclusion of the study revealed that job constraints are highly affecting the academic work; therefore overall academicians should be given facilities in terms of time, finance and administrative report. It was also concluded that both male and female have the equal opportunities for career progress, there is no gender discrimination for professional activities. It was recommended that academician should be rewarded with incentives, promotions, medals for improvement of academic and professional qualification constant appraisal programs and appreciations should be given to motivate the employees.

## KEY WORDS

ODL (Open Distance Learning, Professional Development, Job constraints.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The development of a nation and education are deeply related to each other. Education is widely perceived as the indicator of the socio-economic status and more importantly as an agent of change. Isani and Virk, (2003) argued that the purpose of education is to meet the socio-cultural and educational needs of the country. Various countries therefore have launched various plans to expand their education system to match the world of work, remove illiteracy and make education a lifelong process. But the socio-economic and political forces are great hindrances in achieving these educational goals, so there is a demand to find affective alternative channels. According to Jafri 2002, the expansion of the distance education in other countries both developed

and developing, has established beyond any doubt the fact that this is going to play a very important role in the 21st century. The present dominance of campus-based higher education may become a thing of the past perhaps by the middle of this century, if not earlier than that possibly the cheaper of the two systems may take place faster than expected and it may lead to new structures of educational institutions and new strategies which may be used by both campuses based and distance mode institutions.

According to Keegan (2000), the developing countries have turned towards distance education which is now recognized as an effective supplement or complement to formal education. The term "Distance Education" is fairly new. It denotes the forms of study not led by teachers present in a classroom but support by tutors and an organization at a distance from the students. Open universities are being used in various countries to provide educational and training to people who cannot leave their homes and jobs for full time studies. An Open University provides part time educational facilities through correspondence courses, tutorials, seminars, workshops, laboratories, televisions, radio broadcast and other mass communication media.

Allama Iqbal Open University has provided the open learning to the peoples of Pakistan. The role of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) as discussed by Creed (2000) as under:

"Pakistan established an Open University in 1974, now Allama Iqbal Open University, which has dominated distance education within the country since then. While much of its work is for regular university programme, it has carried out a number of experimental projects, using distance-teaching method for basic education and teacher-upgrading programmes for primary school teacher. This University is the first of its kind in Asia. It operates as a distance learning institution, using human resources and multimedia to impart education to its learners spread all over Pakistan, A.J.K and even in the Middle East."

Allama Iqbal Open University was established to enhance and promote education through informal means of education. There were two main reasons for its establishment. Firstly, to provide education to those people who do not have opportunity to get formal education due to their jobs or any other reason, secondly, to enhance literacy rate through quality education. Allama Iqbal Open University has done a rich job and its services are well recognized nationally and internationally by applying the methodology of Distance Education.

The major purpose of this study was to explore the job constraints of ODL faculty and its effect on their professional development.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Professional Development

The term "professional development" means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers" and principals" effectiveness in raising student achievement.

According to Speck, M. & Knipe, C. (2005), Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both development and career advancement. Professional

development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage.

Chapel Hill (2008) says that there are a variety of approaches to professional development, including consultation, coaching and communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance. Professional development opportunities can range from a single workshop to a semester-long academic course, to services offered by a medley of different professional development providers and varying widely with respect to the philosophy, content, and format of the learning experiences. Some examples of approaches to professional development include:

- **Case Study Method** - The case method is a teaching approach that consists in presenting the students with a case, putting them in the role of a decision maker facing a problem.
- **Consultation** - to assist an individual or group of individuals to clarify and address immediate concerns by following a systematic problem-solving process.
- **Coaching** - to enhance a person's competencies in a specific skill area by providing a process of observation, reflection, and action.
- **Communities of Practice** - to improve professional practice by engaging in shared inquiry and learning with people who have a common goal
- **Lesson Study** - to solve practical dilemmas related to intervention or instruction through participation with other professionals in systematically examining practice
- **Mentoring** - to promote an individual's awareness and refinement of his or her own professional development by providing and recommending structured opportunities for reflection and observation
- **Reflective Supervision** - to support, develop, and ultimately evaluate the performance of employees through a process of inquiry that encourages their understanding and articulation of the rationale for their own practices
- **Technical Assistance** - to assist individuals and their organization to improve by offering resources and information, supporting networking and change efforts

Professional development is a broad term, encompassing a range of people, interests and approaches. Those who engage in professional development share a common purpose of enhancing their ability to do their work. At the heart of professional development is the individual's interest in lifelong learning and increasing their own skills and knowledge.

According to Moore (1983) professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage. There are a variety of approaches to professional development, including consultation, coaching, and communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance.

## 2.2 Goals of Professional Development

Smith (1990) found that the six most frequently set goals for community colleges/ institutions of professional development are as under:
- To increase staff responsiveness to student needs.
- To increase the faculty knowledge about the teaching learning process.
- To increase the faculty's skills in instruction
- To create a climate in which the attainment of effective teaching is the ongoing concern.
- To increase the faculty repertoire of teaching methods
- To reduce student attribution

## 2.3 Researches on Professional Development

Abedor and Sachs (1987) suggested that teaching improvement comes through the interaction of three processes;
- Faculty Development: - Focuses on the knowledge, skills, sensitive and techniques of faculty members, rather than on the courses they teach.
- Organizational Development: - Seeks to change the structure, policies and organizational environment in which instruction takes place.
- Instructional Development: -Focuses on the systematic design, development, implementation and evaluation of instructional materials, lessons, courses and curriculum.

## 2.4 Constraints Hindering Job and Professional Development

Systematic constraints hinder education teachers' ability to participate in professional development. Teachers are hindered by factors that make it hard for them to know what professional development opportunities are available, and then to participate (Burt & Keenan, 1998). After interviewing 60 education "decision makers" and practitioners from 10 states, Wilson and Corbett (2001) found the most important hindering factors included the following:
- **Time Constraints**. Working part time makes it hard for teachers to participate regularly or for extended periods of time.
- **Financial Constraints**. Often teachers are not paid to participate in professional development.
- **Distance**. Professional development is not offered locally through the program but at state-organized, centrally located venues, which requires practitioners to travel.
- **Information Gaps**. Teachers often teach in decentralized locations and have infrequent contact with other practitioners in and out of the program. They may not hear about professional development unless their program directors or other supervisors who serve as "gatekeepers" pass information along.
- **Lack of Face-to-Face Interaction**. Due to the part-time nature of staff, in many programs staff meetings are rare, so teachers have limited opportunities to meet and talk.
- **Mismatch of Goals**. There may be a mismatch between the goals of the professional development and individual practitioners' professional interests. This may result from the diversity of settings and instructional contexts in which teachers work, or can be due to differing perspectives on the overall goals of adult education; for example, between preparing students to pass a test, such as the GED, or preparing them for civic, work, and family life.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Study was descriptive in nature. Population of the study was 137 male and female academicians of four faculties of AIOU. The sample of the population was 70% academicians selected by convenient sampling. It was 90 out of 137 academicians. A questionnaire with 5 point likert scale was used. Each statement in the questionnaire was scored depending upon its nature (positive / negative) according to the responses given by the academicians. In positive items the mode of scoring adopted was 5, 4,3,2,1. In negative items the mode of scoring was 1.2.3.4.5.

| SA | A | U | D | SD |
|----|---|---|---|----|
| Strongly agreed | Agreed | Undecided | Disagreed | Strongly disagreed |

The data obtained was tabulated, interpreted and analyzed on the basis of mean and percentage method. Conclusions were made on the basis of findings and then suitable workable recommendations were made.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1**
**Summary of Statements Showing Percentage Values**

| S# | Statement | SA | A | UNC | DA | SDA | Total |
|----|-----------|----|---|-----|----|-----|-------|
| 1 | You are satisfied with the nature of your job. | 9 | 47 | 5 | 12 | 17 | **90** |
| 2 | You are satisfied with your working environment. | 14 | 49 | 8 | 13 | 6 | **90** |
| 3 | The working schedule is convenient for you. | 22 | 44 | 4 | 9 | 11 | **90** |
| 4 | Your seniors provide you academic assistance in the institution. | 12 | 22 | 6 | 36 | 14 | **90** |
| 5 | Your seniors provide assistance in performing your professional activities. | 7 | 27 | 5 | 42 | 9 | **90** |
| 6 | You have to work under tight deadlines of policies. | 24 | 43 | 4 | 11 | 8 | **90** |
| 7 | You have to face the unnecessary professional rivalry in the organization. | 9 | 43 | 7 | 21 | 10 | **90** |
| 8 | You have equal chances of career progress in the organization | 24 | 56 | 2 | 5 | 3 | **90** |
| 9 | You adjust yourself with the prevailing situation and circumstances of the university. | 29 | 43 | 4 | 8 | 6 | **90** |
| 10 | Your organization gives protection to the rights of the teachers. | 18 | 15 | 6 | 39 | 12 | **90** |
| 11 | Your opinion is being given weight age in decision making process. | 6 | 19 | 7 | 45 | 13 | **90** |

| S# | Statement | SA | A | UNC | DA | SDA | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | You get any inconvenience regarding transport facility of pick and drop of the university. | 14 | 35 | 5 | 19 | 17 | **90** |
| 13 | Teachers' rights are respected in your organization. | 22 | 44 | 8 | 11 | 5 | **90** |
| 14 | Your organization provides favorable working environment. | 31 | 39 | 5 | 9 | 6 | **90** |
| 15 | The attitude of your family is supportive towards job. | 26 | 44 | 5 | 10 | 5 | **90** |
| 16 | Present working environment is discriminatory in respect of gender. | 29 | 37 | 6 | 12 | 6 | **90** |
| 17 | You are encouraged for enrichment of the research culture. | 5 | 12 | 8 | 25 | 40 | **90** |
| 18 | Incentives are given to you on your professional achievement | 3 | 18 | 5 | 23 | 41 | **90** |
| 19 | You get motivation for professional development activities. | 23 | 46 | 4 | 13 | 4 | **90** |
| 20 | There is enough interdepartmental support for professional growth. | 12 | 22 | 7 | 38 | 11 | **90** |
| 21 | Your professional development activities provide you more opportunities to get better jobs. | 26 | 42 | 3 | 14 | 5 | **90** |
| 22 | You feel confident on performing professional development activity. | 5 | 65 | 6 | 6 | 8 | **90** |
| 23 | Your academic work suffers due to your professional development activities. | 23 | 46 | 5 | 12 | 4 | **90** |
| 24 | You encourage your colleagues for professional development. | 12 | 38 | 7 | 22 | 11 | **90** |
| 25 | Administration encourages you for your professional growth. | 17 | 33 | 6 | 25 | 9 | **90** |
| 26 | Financial rewards encourage you towards professional development. | 23 | 41 | 4 | 14 | 8 | **90** |
| 27 | You feel that supportive facilities are adequate to achieve your objectives. | 11 | 46 | 13 | 14 | 6 | **90** |
| 28 | You share your professional activities with your colleagues. | 17 | 33 | 6 | 25 | 9 | **90** |
| 29 | Your administration gives you financial rewards on better performance. | 22 | 39 | 7 | 12 | 10 | **90** |

**Table 2**
**Chances of Trainings Availed by Faculty Members**
**for Their Professional Development**

| S# | No. of Training Levels Availed | No. of Trainings Availed | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Respondents who availed only one training | 18 | 20.00% |
| 2. | Respondents who availed two trainings | 31 | 34.44% |
| 3. | Respondents who availed three trainings | 21 | 23.33% |
| 4. | Respondents who availed four trainings | 15 | 16.67% |
| 5. | Respondents who availed five trainings | 5 | 5.56% |
| | Total | 90 | 100% |

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents (34.44 percent) availed two trainings for professional development in their service period in the university while 23.33 percent availed three trainings, 20% availed only one training, 16.67 percent availed four trainings and 5.56 percent trainings availed five trainings for their professional development in their career in the university.

**Table 3**
**Suggestions to Minimize the Effect of Job Constraints**
**on Professional Development**

| S# | Suggestion | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Interdepartmental interaction can minimize the effect of job constraints. | 69% |
| 2. | Work Sharing with their colleagues | 68% |
| 3. | Allocation of funds for professional training | 67% |
| 4. | Financial assistance to lecturers for further studies. | 66% |
| 5. | Encouragement of faculty academic work | 63% |
| 6. | Arrangement of refresher courses for professional development | 61% |
| 7. | Juniors should be given chances for professional development. | 59% |
| 8. | There should be conducive working environment | 58% |
| 9. | Research oriented activities should be encouraged. | 55% |

Table 3 indicates that maximum of the respondents (69 percent) suggested as interdepartmental interaction can minimize the effect of job constrains, 68 percent of the respondents suggested work sharing with their colleagues, 67 percent of the respondents suggested allocation of funds for professional training, 66 percent suggested financial

assistance to lecturers for further studies, 63 percent of the respondents suggested encouragement of faculty academic work, 61 percent respondents suggested arrangement of refresher courses for professional development, 59 percent of the respondents suggested as juniors should be given chances for professional development, 58 percent of the respondents suggested as there should be conducive working environment and 55 percent of the respondents suggested as research oriented activities should be encouraged.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn:

### Objective 1:
To study the job constraints of faculty members effecting their professional development.

Majority of the faculty members perceived that they are satisfied with the nature of their job while 33% of the respondents felt nature of their job as a constraint. Majority of the respondents showed their satisfaction with their working environment and convenient working schedule. Majority of the faculty members perceived that their senior did not provide them academic assistance.

### Objective 2:
To find out the effects of job constraints on the performance of the teachers.

Majority of the faculty members opined that their performance was not up to the mark due to non-provision of assistance by the organization in performing their professional activities. They perceived that they had to work under tight deadlines of policies. They also viewed that their opinion was not given weight age in decision making process. Majority of the respondents had opinion that their rights were respected in their organization. They felt confident on performing professional development activity. They felt that their professional development activities provided them more opportunities to get better jobs. They admitted that their academic work suffer due to their professional development activities. Majority of the faculty members held that they encouraged their colleagues for their professional development and also shared their professional activities while administration encouraged them in this regard. .

### Objective 3:
To improve the attitude of teachers towards professional development and suggestions

Majority of the respondents proposed that inter departmental interaction can minimize the effect of job constraints. They suggested that the effect of job constraints can be minimized for professional and academic growth through work sharing, allocation of funds for professional training, encouragement of faculty academic work, arrangement of development and financial assistance to faculty members for further studies. They also suggested that juniors should be given chances for professional development. Conducive working environment be created. Research oriented activities should be encouraged. Performance based reward be given to faculty.

As far as chances availed by the faculty members for their professional development were concerned 18 respondents availed one chance, 31 availed two chances, 21 availed three chances, 15 availed four chances and 5 availed five chances

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been made:

- The research reveals that majority of senior members of the faculty provide academic and professional assistance in AIOU. It is therefore, recommended that all senior faculty members should encourage their juniors in providing academic and professional assistance. It will motivate the junior faculty members. Motivation is a key factor as well in affecting job stress among academician. Faculty members who are highly motivated will feel happier and are more willing to work for the AIOU.

- It is recommended that the university should make teacher friendly laws. These laws will be very helpful for faculty members. These will minimize the state of uneasiness, uncertainty and anxiety among faculty members. In this way the faculty members will be able to grow professionally. Their performance will also improve.

- Majority of the faculty members intentions show that their opinion is not being given weight age in decision making process. It is therefore, recommended that faculty members opinion be given due weight age in decision making. Thus, their confidence level will increase. They will get encouragement vis-à-vis their performance for their professional development will become better.

- It is recommended that faculty member be encouraged for the enrichment of research culture. The promotion of research culture will not only help the faculty members in their professional development but also this culture will attract distance learners.

- Majority of the respondents perceived that incentives were not given to them for their professional achievements. It is therefore, recommended that faculty members be given incentives on their professional development. Incentives will improve motivational level as well as performance of the faculty members.

- The study reveals that there is not enough interdepartmental support for professional growth. It is therefore, recommended that interdepartmental support be ensured in the university. The administration of AIOU should introduce multidisciplinary approach in the university. The approach will be more helpful for faculty members for their professional growth.

- It is also recommended that academicians should be rewarded with promotions, increments, special scholarships, prizes and medals for improvement in their academic and professional qualifications.

- The present study has been conducted on academicians of AIOU, it is recommended that in future the study may be done in a comparative perspective

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