Human Resource Development Centres in Higher Education Scenario: A Study of Opinions on Refresher Courses

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Abstract: Every human being is an asset and useful resource to the world. Development of the human being in diverse areas so to reap the maximum from the potentials that they possess through human acquisition can be in simple words Human Resource Development. In higher education scenario, the development of human resource through the teaching community with respect to intellectual capacity is the current challenge. University/college teachers are the first resource that needs to be developed before bringing up the products that are coming out from the teaching learning process. And so different means were introduced to boost the professional growth of the university/colleges teachers in different parts of the world. In India, UGC-ASCs or presently knows as UGC-HRDCs that were set up in different states to cater the growing needs of the university and college teachers. To achieve the above mentioned requirements, resource persons from various subject experts are selected who have mastery over the subjects with experiences and achievements. In the same manner to impart professional growth through refresher courses is vital. And so this particular study tried to find out the opinions of the participants and resource persons towards refresher courses. The study reveals that the participants and resource persons have a positive and sound opinion towards refresher courses of Human Resource Development Centres.

1. Introduction

Human resource development in Higher education implies more specialized study normally undertaken after successful completion of a good basic education, which normally lasts for 11 years. Being resourceful is something very important which entails such training and development to perform with specific development, coaching, mentoring, successful planning and organizing the development.

The term, ‘Higher Education’ signifies higher education courses in any institution. Under this comes education in Colleges, Universities and Centres of Advanced Studies. The colleges include graduate and postgraduate colleges affiliated to the universities getting grant-in-aid or controlled and managed by State Governments, Central Government as well as private bodies. Universities are famous for their quality and standard and pursue research work of a very high order to search for truth and achievement of excellence. It must promote the development of total personality of students and inculcate in them the commitment to society. It has been realized that higher education is not a means of awarding degrees and distribution of favours, it is a means of improving the quality of life of everybody, to live with dignity in a highly competitive world.

Teaching in higher education is not mere dispensation of knowledge but development of independent creative thinking ability, social consciousness and commitment to the common wealth and national integration along with a good value system. Better qualification and UGC scales of pay have boosted the image of teacher in higher education. Committed teachers, with internal locus of control, contribute effectively to intrinsic and extrinsic student motivation. Unhealthy factors such as strikes and student indiscipline are minimized or eliminated completely when such disciplined teachers with their integrated styles of leadership are available, maximizing work in a humane atmosphere is possible with these excellent people. Such teachers follow the participatory methods of teaching and utilizing the best educational technology.

Therefore, refresher courses are specially designed courses that are organized for all serving teachers in colleges and university departments. It provides opportunities for serving teachers to exchange experiences with their peers and to mutually learn from each other. Refresher course also provide a forum for serving teachers to keep abreast of the latest advances in the various subjects. The courses are primarily subject-oriented and are introduced for the in-service teachers who have completed five years of service. The length of service of a teacher required for participation in a Refresher Course has now been reduced, provided
the teacher participants has already attended an Orientation Programme. A teacher can now participate in a Refresher Course one year after attending an Orientation Programme even before completion of five years of service in a substantive post. The objective of these courses of 3-4 weeks duration is to keep the teacher aware of the new knowledge in their respective discipline that are continually proliferating at a tremendous rate and also to provide them an opportunity to refresh in their already acquired knowledge. If the teachers are not adequately updated with the new knowledge and information in their respective disciplines, the education of our student is bound to be out-dated and would eventually lose its relevance. During the tenure of these courses eminent resource (persons who are leading exponents in specific areas of a particular subject are invited to highlight the major latest developments in their respective areas of specializations. Resource persons are those persons who are invited for the RCs from the teachers of the various colleges or university who are subject experts in their field of profession who either by their experience, teaching are able to conduct lectures seminars or workshops for the participants/in-service university and college teachers.

2. Review of Related Literature

To bring the importance and depth of the study the investigator has made a tremendous effort to relate the present study with the literatures available. The following related studies conducted by Joshi and Singh (1978), Chalam (1987), Joshi (1987), Singh (1987), Passi and Sahoo (1988), Das (1990), Dhar and Singh (1990), Pandy (1990), Srinivasan (1990), Despande and Jantli (1991), Passi and Pal (1991), Indiresen (1991), Passi and Rajendra Pal (1992), Rehman and Biswal (1992), Kapoor (1992), Joseph (1993), Joseph (1993), Mehrotra (1993), Rao (1993), Rao and Palsane (1994), Singh (1997), Rastogi (1998), Dutta (2000) give the glimpse of refresher courses in different areas that UGC-ASCs conduct throughout the year. All the studies manifest that there were some instance of significant influences of gender, teaching experiences and type of institutions with respect to different areas of the refresher courses such as physical facilities, professional growth, participants/resource persons, attainment of the objectives, teaching & research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation. But the literatures found do not indicate that studies related to the opinions of participants and resource persons conducted with respect to refresher courses specifically and thus this particular study finds prominent stand.

3. Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study are:-

a) To find out the influence of sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences of the opinions of participants and resource persons towards refresher courses.

b) To find out the interactional effects of sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences of the opinions of participants and resource persons towards refresher courses.

4. Hypotheses

a) There is no significant influence of sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences of the opinions of participants and resource persons towards refresher courses.

b) There is no significant interactional effects of sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences of the opinions of participants and resource persons towards refresher courses.

5. Methodology

5.1 Population

The population of the study can be seen in the following table given below:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Resource Persons</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refresher Courses</td>
<td>1724</td>
<td>1401</td>
<td>3125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the Universities (2009-2011)

The above table-5.1 shows that 1401 resource persons and 1724 participants were invited for the refresher courses by the UGC-ASCs in North East India.

5.2 Sample

The table given below shows the sample of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Resource Persons</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refresher Courses</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the Universities (2009-2011)
The table 5.2 shows that 20% from the population randomly selected participants and resource persons from refresher courses of the UGC-ASCs in North East India, according to the annual reports of the University given above. There are 233 resource persons and 396 participants taken as the sample of the study.

5.3 Tools of the Study

The self-developed tools that were used for data collection can be seen in the following points and have undergone different processes of construction and standardization so to be reliable and valid in the contents.
(i) Participants’ Opinionnaire towards Refresher Courses.
(ii) Resource Persons’ Opinionnaire towards Refresher Courses.

5.4 Data Collection

The required data was collected from the resource persons and participants belonging to different higher education institutions scattered all over the North East of India by means of postal services, hand delivery and personal visits.

5.5 Statistical Techquines

The various statistical techquines that were used in this particular study are F-test, t-test, mean, averages.

6. Analysis & Interpretations

The analysis and interpretations are subjected to the investigator’s point of view and given below:

6.1 Participants Opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Variance</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (A)</td>
<td>3.219</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experiences (B)</td>
<td>1.212</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Institutions (C)</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B</td>
<td>1.786</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X C</td>
<td>5.279</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B X C</td>
<td>.586</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B X C</td>
<td>1.270</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

df/388 at .05= 3.87; .01=6.72

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimensions such as such as Physical facilities, professional growth, resource persons, attainment of objectives, teaching & research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities and evaluation for the sex(Male & Female) of participants’ opinions towards refresher course is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One, which states that there is no significant influence of sex with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses in retained. Further, on dimension such as educational awareness of refresher courses of participants’ opinion it has been found out that the ‘F’ value is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of sex with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses in not retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of participants’ opinions for the teaching experiences (10 yrs above & below 10yrs) is not significant. The same trends have been found out on different dimensions of refresher courses as replied by the participants i.e., dimension physical facilities, professional growth, resource persons, attainment of the objectives, teaching research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation. Hence, the Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of teaching experiences with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of participants’ opinions and data on dimension such as physical facilities, resource persons, teaching learning methodology, management system financial system, content enrichment & course materials, evaluation for the types of institutions (Govt. Non-Govt.) is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained. Further, on dimensions such as professional growth, attainment of objectives, teaching research activities and educational awareness of participants’ opinions, it has been found out that the ‘F’ value is significant. In these cases, the Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is not retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of participants’ opinions and the data on dimension such as physical facilities, professional growth, attainment of objectives, teaching research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, evaluation for the types of institutions (Govt. Non-Govt.) is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained. Further, on dimensions such as professional growth, attainment of objectives, teaching research activities and educational awareness of participants’ opinions, it has been found out that the ‘F’ value is significant. In these cases, the Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained.
system, content enrichment and course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation for the interaction between sex and teaching experiences is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex and teaching experiences with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained. Further, on dimension such as opinions of participants towards resource persons in refresher courses it has been found out that the ‘F’ value is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex and teaching experiences with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is not retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimension such as professional growth and attainment of objectives of opinions of participants is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex and types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is not retained. Further, on dimension such as opinions of participants towards resource persons in refresher courses it has been found out that the ‘F’ value is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex and teaching experiences with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimension such as physical facilities, resource persons, teaching research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation of participants opinions towards refresher courses for the interactional effect between sex and types of colleges is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex and types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of participants’ opinions for the interactional effect between teaching experiences and types of institutions is not significant. The same trends have been found out on all the 12 different dimensions of refresher courses as replied by the participants i.e., physical facilities, professional growth, resource persons, attainment of objectives, teaching research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between teaching experiences and types of institutions with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimensions such as physical facilities, resource persons, teaching research activities, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment and course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation of participants opinions for the overall interactional effects among types of institutions, sex and teaching experiences with the opinions of participant towards refresher courses is retained. Further, on dimensions such as professional growth and attainment of the objectives of participants’ opinions towards refresher courses it has been found out that the ‘F’ value is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between types of institutions, sex and teaching experiences with the opinions of participants towards refresher courses is not retained.

6.2 Resource Persons’ Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Variance</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex (A)</td>
<td>2.784</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experiences (B)</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Institution (C)</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B</td>
<td>1.736</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X C</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B X C</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A X B X C</td>
<td>7.935</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{df}/225 \text{ at } .05=3.89; \text{ .01}=6.76\]

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimensions such as participants, teaching & research activities, and evaluation for the sex (male & female) of resource persons’ opinions towards refresher courses is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One, which states that there is no significant influence of sex with the opinions of resource persons towards refresher courses, is not retained. Further, on dimension such as professional growth, attainment of the objectives, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities and educational awareness of opinions of resource persons is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of sex with the opinions of resource towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of resource persons’ opinions for the teaching experiences (10 yrs above & below 10yrs) is not significant. The same trends have been found out on all the 12
different dimensions of refresher courses as replied by the resource persons. In these cases, Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of teaching experiences with the opinions of resource towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimensions for types of institutions such as physical facilities, professional growth, resource persons, attainment of the objectives, teaching & research activities, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, educational awareness and evaluation of resource persons’ opinions towards refresher courses is not significant. In these cases, Hypothesis One which states that there is no significant influence of types of institutions groups with the opinions of resource towards refresher courses is retained. Further, on dimension such as teaching learning methodology of the opinions of resource persons towards refresher course, the ‘F’ value is significant. In this case, Hypothesis One, which states that there is no significant influence of types of institutions groups with the opinions of resource persons towards refresher courses, is not retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of resource persons opinions for the interactional effect between sex and teaching experiences is not significant. The same trends have been found out on all the 12 different dimensions of refresher courses as replied by the resource persons. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences is not retained. Further, on dimensions such as physical facilities, professional growth, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, and educational awareness of opinion of resource persons towards refresher course, the ‘F’ value is significant. In this cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data of resource persons’ opinions for the interactional effect between teaching experiences & types of institutions is not significant. The same trends have been found out on all the 12 different dimensions of refresher courses as replied by the resource persons. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect between teaching experiences & types of institutions with the opinions of resource towards refresher courses is retained.

The ‘F’ value on whole data and data on dimensions for overall interaction such as participants, attainment of the objectives, teaching & research activities and evaluation of resource persons opinions towards refresher courses among sex and types of institutions and teaching experiences is significant. In these cases, Hypothesis Two which states that there is no significant interactional effect among sex and types of colleges, and teaching experiences with the opinions of resource towards refresher courses is not retained. Further, on dimensions such as physical facilities, professional growth, teaching learning methodology, management system, financial system, content enrichment & course materials, extension activities, and educational awareness of opinion of resource persons towards refresher course, the ‘F’ value is not significant. In this cases, Hypothesis Two, which states that there is no significant interactional effects between sex, types of institutions and teaching experiences with the opinions of resource towards refresher courses is retained.

7. Findings

The findings that followed are the result of observation and analysis which are summarized in the following pages.

7.1 Opinion of Participants towards Refresher Courses

a) The female participants have more positive opinions towards educational awareness in refresher courses.

b) Participants’ opinion on refresher courses for the teaching experiences (<10yrs & >10 yrs) data as a whole and its dimension separately do not show any significant differences.

c) The participants from govt. colleges have more positive opinions towards professional growth, attainment of objectives, teaching research activities and educational awareness in refresher courses.

d) Both male & female participants having below 10 years of teaching experiences have more positive opinions towards resource persons in refresher courses.
c) The female participants belonging from govt. colleges have more positive opinion towards professional growth and attainment of objectives in refresher courses.

f) Participants’ opinion on refresher courses for the interactional effect between teaching experiences and types of institutions data as a whole and its dimension separately do not show any significant interactional effects.

g) The female participants of refresher courses having more than 10 years of teaching experiences belonging from govt. colleges have more positive opinions on professional growth and attainment of objectives in refresher courses.

7.2 Opinion of Resource Persons towards Refresher Courses

a) The female resource persons have more positive opinions towards refresher courses on the whole, towards participants, teaching & research activities and evaluation in refresher courses.

b) Resource persons’ opinion on refresher courses for the teaching experiences (<10yrs & >10 yrs) data as a whole and its dimension separately do not show any significant differences.

c) The resource persons from non-govt. colleges have positive opinion towards teaching learning methodology in refresher courses.

d) Resource persons’ opinion on refresher courses for the interactional effect between sex & teaching experiences, data as a whole and its dimensions do not show any significant interactional effects.

e) The female resource persons from govt. colleges have more positive opinion towards participants in refresher courses.

f) Resource persons’ opinion on refresher courses for the interactional effect between teaching experiences and types of institutions data as a whole and its dimension separately do not show any significant interactional effects.

g) The female resource persons having more than 10 years and below 10 years of teaching experiences belonging from both govt. and non-govt. colleges have more positive opinions towards participants, attainment of objectives, teaching research activities and evaluation in refresher courses.

8. Suggestions

The various suggestions given are duly from the interactions undertaken by the investigator with participants and resource persons from the field and the analysis that followed which can be illustrated as in the followings:-

a) More physical facilities can be provided in terms of furniture, classrooms, well equipped library.

b) Every university/college teachers can avail the refresher courses for the professional growth and development.

c) Appropriate selection procedure can be developed to select resource persons for the refresher courses.

d) The refresher courses can be conducted as per as the requirement of the university/college teachers as prescribed by the syllabus/objectives of HRDCs.

e) The participants of refresher courses can take mini research/projects after attending the courses so to undertake major research/projects in the long run.

f) The lecture methods can be replaced by extension activities during the refresher courses.

g) The refresher courses can be managed by incorporating sound activities of educational importance based on the subject interest.

h) Financial system in terms of T.A. & D.A. can be made appropriate.

i) Latest trends in teaching learning practices can be imparted in the refresher courses so to create awareness in the uses of technology for university/college teachers.

j) Evaluation after the refresher courses can be done but should not be criteria to assess for promotions.

k) There is a need to reduce the number of days involved in the refresher courses.

9. Conclusion

Refresher courses are necessary for the university/college teachers to grow professionally. UGC-HRDCs have played a significant role to conduct refresher courses in North East Region of India. The participants and resource persons of refresher courses as per the analysis have positive and favourable opinions which imply that there is a need of such courses to boost teachers’ growth to bring qualitative development in the region. All the same the various suggestions above are necessary to continue the wonderful initiatives of the UGC-HRDCs in a smooth manner so that problems can be minimized for greater good in the long run.

10. References


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