Need for Mentoring in Educational Institutions

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1. Introduction

Mentoring as a concept has a pivotal role to play in improving individual performance alongside organizational growth and development. In the present competitive and stress laden work environment, a mentor can prove to be a saving grace for the new incumbents. A Mentor serves as a Guide, Coach, Motivator and an Emotional support system. Employees in any organization are constantly exposed to challenging situations, be it at an individual level, dyadic level, team level or at an organizational level.

With years of experience, one learns how to ward off stress and pressures at work place. For the new employees, Work-Life Balance, Relationship Building and QWL are the major areas of concern. When a young person joins an organization, he needs help from a senior person to guide his efforts, correct his mistakes and put him on track. The main objective of mentoring is to help an employee to develop psychological maturity and effectiveness and get integrated with the organization. Mentoring can prove to be an effective tool in bridging the gap between external constraints and internal ability. It can be of great help in channelizing the energy of young employees and steering them towards excellence.

A new teacher or a lecturer needs to have a strategy to attract and retain students' attention. A certificate or a degree cannot give this skill, a mentor can teach this skill. Mentoring can prove to be an effective tool in improving the capabilities of the teaching faculty. Stress management, Time management, Creativity, and Counseling are the areas where a mentor can be of potential help. A group of experienced and motivated faculty can be identified in every institution and they can be assigned as a mentor to a few new recruits.

2. Concept of Mentoring

The concept of Mentoring is as old as the human civilization. The culture of 'Mentoring' dates back to ancient Greece, when Odysseus entrusted his friend Mentor with the responsibility of his son Telamachu's education in his absence. The relationship between Telamachu and Mentor came to be known as 'Mentoring'. Indian history is also filled with examples of Mentoring in the form of Guru Dronacharya and Arjuna or Chanakya and King Chandragupta Maurya.

According to Lewinson, a mentor is a teacher, sponsor, counselor, developer of skills and intellect, host guide, exemplar and most importantly supporter and facilitator in the realization of the vision the young person has about the kind of life he wants as an adult. A Mentor is a person who systematically develops another person's abilities through intensive tutoring, coaching and guidance. Mentoring is a process whereby a senior employee acts as a friend, philosopher and guide to the new recruits. Mentoring performs both career related functions as well as psychological functions. Effective mentoring program first develops the positive mentoring relationship and then, focuses on guiding the desired behavioral changes. Mentoring process can be formal and informal, structured and unstructured.

Mentoring as a process involves three main stages, namely Communicating, Empowering and Helping. The stage of communicating involves listening, questioning and giving timely feedback to the mentee. The mentor should effectively communicate and share feedback with the mentee so as to reduce his blind areas and increase his self-awareness. Empowering aims at increasing the mentee's autonomy and freedom of action. The mentor should encourage the mentee to take initiative and think differently. Being too critical about mentee's behavior could negatively impact his development. Helping implies showing genuine care, concern and empathy towards the mentee. A mentor needs to be sensitive towards his mentee and extend a helping hand whenever needed.

An advantage of mentoring is that it helps to acclimatize a new employee to the job and organization. By having a "go to" person to ask questions, discuss scenarios and generally learn the nuances of the organization, the mentee can become a productive member in a short period of time and never feel alienated to the work environment. The mentee can gain the sense of achievement that comes from the mentor's feedback and assessment of his / her progress. The mentee's quest to gain the mentor's approval can serve as a motivating force to improve his / her performance continually. The mentor can gain satisfaction from knowing that he / she is helping an individual and can take a measure of pride in his / her accomplishments. For a mentor who has already achieved a great deal of success, He / she can look at the process as a way of "giving back."

Any concept introduced in the organization has its repercussions too. A possible disadvantage of Mentoring is that if the mentor-mentee relationship is forced, like when a supervisor assigns an experienced employee to tutor a new hire, it is possible that the two may not hit it off, or that the mentor may feel he / she doesn't have the time to fulfill the role while still carrying out his/ her professional duties. The strained relationship can be counterproductive and even make the mentee feel he

/ she is not a welcome addition to the company. Another possible limitation is that in some instances, the mentor may feel that the mentee is not progressing quickly enough or doesn't seem able or unwilling to follow his / her direction, leading to frustration. The mentees may also become frustrated if they feel that they are not getting the guidance that they need. In either situation, it may be necessary for the mentee to find a new mentor if practically possible, before the situation erodes further.

Inspite of a few limitations, mentoring in the workplace can have long-term benefits as employees become more self-directed and develop stronger communication and problem-solving skills. This allows for an institution to become more creative and focus its attention on growth, rather than training. Mentored employees value collaboration and sharing of information, which can lead to a stronger organization. Mentored workers are also apt to become involved in professional organizations that further both their careers and the profession itself.

2.1 Mentoring Across Industry
Multi-national Companies like Wipro, Infosys, Intel, GE and Citigroup have successfully designed and implemented Mentoring Programs in their organizations. As a matter of fact these companies also have special mentoring programs for women employees. Women employees are encouraged to approach their mentors regularly for guidance, which can relate not only to purely professional matters but also personal ones that impinge upon their professional performance. This special focus on women employees is due to the fact that there is a dearth of women at the top and senior level positions. According to a WRC report, 36% of the labour force comprises of women employees, out of this 22.6% of employees are employed at lower and middle level, and only 5% of the women make it to the Board of Directors.

In Japan, it is a common practice for all workers in a company to actively seek a senior employee's support and guidance. This person is called Oyabun which literally means the 'father status' and his protégé is called Kabun. The Kabun consults and takes guidance from Oyabun on important professional as well as personal issues. The senior employees consider it their privilege if they are considered to play the role of Oyabun.

Since 1986, the training department of the Neyveli Lignite Corporation Ltd. has been working on a Mentoring Program for its employees as a part of its HRD activities. Under this program senior managers with 15 – 20 years experience are given the charge of nurturing the new generation of young managers and preparing them to take on future responsibilities. The Mentors are entrusted with the task of designing a Career Development plan for their mentees and guiding them towards achieving their career goals.

At Hewlett-Packard, mentoring is extended to all new managers at all levels, both new entrants and promotees. Here, mentoring which is a 9 – 12 month program is not only used to facilitate a mutual fit between the individual and the organization, but also to groom high-potential managers for future leadership.

2.2 Mentoring in Educational Institutions
Mentoring is defined as a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person helps a less experienced person. It is an ongoing process in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to others who can become effective contributors to the goals of the organization. Mentoring process is important for teaching profession where experience is important. In teaching profession low motivation, burn-out or quitting the profession or attrition are some of the problems that may occur if the novice teachers are not given guidance and support in their initial days.

Since the 1980s many countries have seen a massive increase in the number of formal programs of school-based mentoring for newly appointed teachers. High expectations and a large amount of money are put into the mentoring programs. These Mentor preparation programs are extremely variable in nature and quality and the focus is more on administrative aspects of the role than on developing mentors' ability to support and facilitate mentees' professional learning.

Mentoring as a concept has been implemented in Europe through EU projects. One of them is TISSNTE (Teacher Induction: Supporting the Supporters of Novice Teachers in Europe) project. TISSNTE project, carried out between 2006 and 2009 with the support of European Commission, aimed at developing a Mentor Training program for European mentors. Twenty-two institutions from twelve different countries have developed five days mentor training program. The program includes six main themes related with mentoring which is: classroom observation, evaluation/feedback, communication, roles and reflection, planning, coaching process and learning environment (TISSNTE 2009).

Junior Faculty mentoring program is offered in several universities and colleges around the world. Programs are conducted to guide junior faculty in building long and productive careers in academic institutions. Mentoring is a well-structured program in the University of California and Stanford University. University of California has a mentoring team comprising of 3 members, one of them as the primary member the faculty has regular scheduled meetings and even ad-hoc one to one meetings to discuss any issues or problems that junior faculty confront. University of Wisconsin and Oregon have special Women faculty Program to increase the representation of women in several fields and branches. Emory University, USA issues a junior faculty and senior faculty application form to become a mentor or a mentee. The mentor needs to fill his / her preference for a potential mentor. He / she needs to specify the gender, race, age and department of the mentor he / she prefers. Mentee needs to mention any three areas he / she would like to be mentored in. Mentors are also asked to review the performance of junior faculty on issues like how to prepare for a class, what to expect in a class and how to handle different situations.

In the Indian Context, Mentoring in several Indian colleges and Universities involves just a day long orientation program with a brief profile of the institution , the do's and don'ts ,the culture and environment and lastly what is expected of them . In many academic institutions the welfare officer acts as the mentor, a junior faculty approaches him / her only when there is a

dire need. A one day seminar is organized by several colleges and universities in India especially in the wake of NAAC accreditation as Faculty Development Program. These programs aim at addressing a host of issues that faculty members come across every day. Eminent academicians and educationists are invited to speak on issues like 'Work –life Balance', 'Creating the right work environment', 'How to be effective in the classroom scenario' etc.

Such programs are highly effective but are held only once a year and do not help in handling day to day problems of the junior faculty. Refresher courses are organized by Government colleges, Central and State Universities for junior faculty members every year. This feature too takes place once a year or whenever there is recruitment or just after the induction of new faculty members. These courses which are a week long do not help the newly recruited faculty in times of need. Most of the private educational institutions have no definite plan with regards to Induction or Orientation Program. Mentoring as a concept has not found its due recognition in academic circles. It is indeed carried out at a mere informal level.

Boice, R in his book "Quick Starters: New Faculty Who Succeeded", suggests incorporating effective practices to improve teaching. It is very essential to support and foster professional development of the junior faculty so that they can settle down and look forward to academic growth. The need of the hour is to have a regular Mentoring program in all academic institutions. Mentoring Program gives a new direction and new dimension to both teaching and learning,

3. Problem Statement

Mentoring is all about understanding the KSA (Knowledge, Skill and Ability) of Mentee and guiding him / her to enrich his / her strengths and curb or eliminate the weaknesses. The concept of Mentoring has found a place in corporate world, however it still hasn't received due attention when it comes to Academics. Educational Institutions are alien to the concept of Mentoring. Educational Institutions play an indispensable role in shaping the mind of future citizens of the country. They foster the process of Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Management.

The teachers are knowledge providers and they stand as Role Models for their students. The art of teaching cannot be learnt, it's a skill that you are born with. But the art of managing students, managing critical situations, managing time and managing emotions can be learnt from experienced hands. The concept of Induction or Orientation Training finds a mention in only a few Educational Institutions. Learning happens on the job and errors made whilst at work can have serious repercussions.

The institution in question Bhandarkars' Arts & Science College, located in Kundapur Taluk of Udupi district was established in the year 1963 and offers Pre-university, Under Graduate and Post Graduate courses. Catering to over 2000 rural and semi urban students annually, Bhandarkars' College has created a brand name for itself. However, it does not have a formal Induction / Orientation program for its new faculty members. The senior faculty members do guide and support their junior colleagues when in need but the concept of Mentoring has not taken shape. The college management is keen on improving the quality of teaching imparted in the institution and has continually encouraged its staff to undertake research and learning programs.

Vijaya College (Jayanagar), Bangalore now, BHS First Grade College then was started by BHS Higher Education Society in the year 1989. With student strength of over 2,000, the college offers degree courses in Arts, Science and Commerce. This institution unlike Bhandarkars' College caters to the urban students. Vijaya College has always strived to integrate academics with literary and cultural activities in a bid to promote all round development of students. The new faculty members who represent the rural, semi-urban and urban set up had expressed a need for a support system to encourage and guide their performance; hence, this study has taken its present form.

4. Objectives

This study will aim at understanding the problems faced by new faculty at Bhandarkars' College and Vijaya College and whether the concept of Mentoring could help in improving the performance and effectiveness of new faculty. Improving the work culture, enhancing knowledge, research orientation could be some of the core areas where the concept of Mentoring can be applied. The objective of the research would be to assess and understand the following perspectives:

4.1 To understand whether the faculties face any problems during the initial days of their career.
4.2 To identify the types of problems that a new faculty encounters.
4.3 4.3 To find out whether there is a need for Induction / Orientation training in Educational Institutions.
4.4 To identify whether there is a need for Mentoring in Educational Institutions.
4.5 To highlight the areas where the concept of Mentoring could be of use for new faculty.
4.6 To suggest measures to apply the concept of mentoring for the benefit and growth of young faculty members.
4.7 To identify the ideal mentor and frequency of mentoring sessions.
4.8 To compare and analyze the problems faced by new faculty in semi-urban (Kundapura) and urban (Bangalore) work environment.

5. Research Methodology

This study aims at understanding the need for a mentoring concept in educational institutions. The need for mentoring has been studied through opinion survey of teaching faculty in Bhandarkars' Arts and Science College, Kundapura, Udupi District and Vijaya College (Jayanagar), Bangalore, Karnataka, . The problems faced by new teaching staff in the discharge of their responsibilities have been collected through questionnaires and the need for mentoring has been analyzed. Mentoring,

through the use of an experienced person who need not be from the same department can be helpful in guiding the performance of young employees. Technical, Interpersonal and Political Skills can be conveyed in such a relationship from the older and experienced to the newer and younger employee.

Judgment and Convenience Sampling techniques have been applied to identify the faculty who were chosen to take the questionnaire. The sample selected for the research represents both male and female employees of both the colleges. A representative sample would consist of new faculties (Within 2 yrs of service), Faculties with 5 – 10 yrs experience and senior faculty members (Above 10 yrs experience). Structured – Undisguised Questionnaires have been used to collect information from the chosen sample. Closed ended questions have been designed to find out whether the employees feel that the concept of Mentoring could be introduced in the Institutions.

6. Data Analysis

Primary data has been collected at Bhandarkars' Arts and Science College, Kundapura and at Vijaya College (Jayanagar), Bangalore in the month of Oct – Nov 2014. A sample of 30 and 20 faculty members has been collected at Bhandarkars' Arts and Science College and Vijaya College (Jayanagar) respectively. The data collected through questionnaires has been analyzed using various graphical tools.

Name of the Institution	Total Faculty Strength	Arts	Science	Commerce	Sample Size
Bhandarkars' Arts and Science College, Kundapura (BCK)	97	35	42	20	30
Vijaya College (Jayanagar), Bangalore	72	30	22	20	20

1.1 Gender Ratio and Discipline Representation of Respondents

| Institutions	Sample Size	Gender Ratio of respondents		Discipline Representation of respondents		
		Male	Female	Arts	Science	Commerce
BCK	30	16	14	11	12	7
Vijaya	20	06	14	8	5	7

- In BCK the sample collected consisted of 47% female staff, whereas in Vijaya College 70% of the staff selected for study were female.
- At BCK out of a sample size of 30 respondents, 37%, 40% & 23% faculty represented Arts, Science & Commerce respectively. At Vijaya College, 40% represented Arts, 25% Science & 35% represented Commerce out of 20 chosen respondents.

### 1.2 Teaching Experience of Respondents
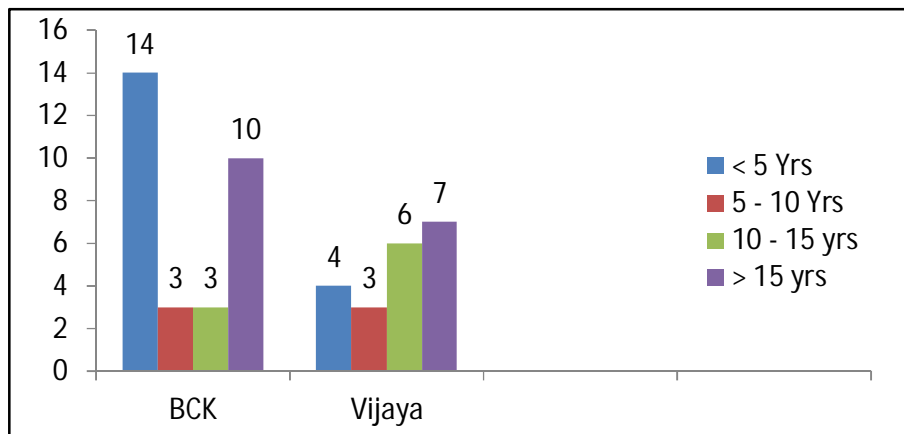
- Out of the chosen sample at BCK, 47% were within 5 years of teaching experience whereas 43% had over 10 years of teaching experience.
- At Vijaya College, 20% of the chosen respondents were under 5 years of teaching experience and 65% were over 10 years of teaching experience. Hence, it was ideal for identifying both probable Mentors and Mentees.
- The staff at both these institutions put in 16 – 20 hours of teaching per week and comprise of temporary as well as permanent staff.

1.3 Problems Faced by New Faculty
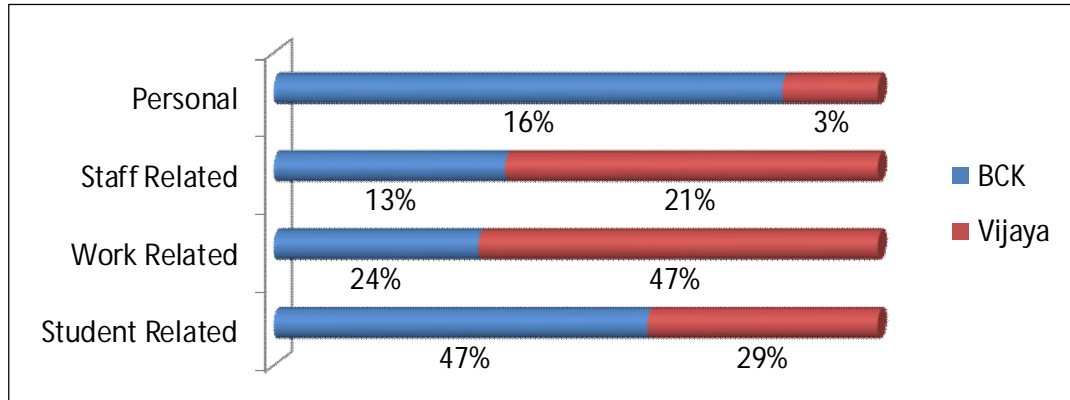
- On comparing both the institutions, we find that in BCK the major problem faced by new faculty is student related (47%), whereas in Vijaya College, work related issues (47%) seems to be the main concern for new faculty.
- Majority of the respondents mentioned Head of the Department or the Principal as the contact person when faced with any problem.

1.4 Respondent's Personal Experience
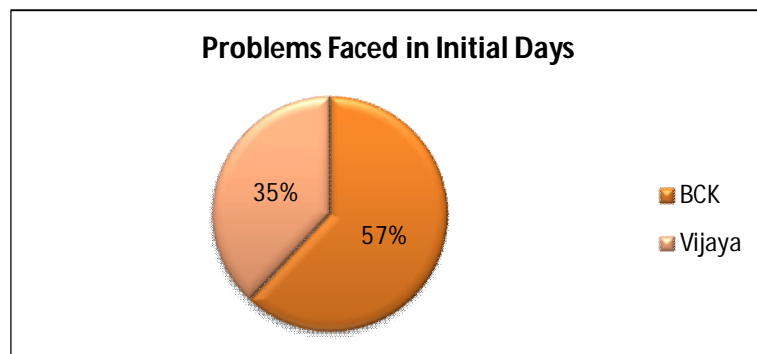
- In both the institutions the respondents faced problems in their initial days. The faculty at BCK had experienced more problems when compared to their counterparts in Vijaya College.
- The most common problems were student related and work related. 10% of the respondents had difficulty in adjusting with their senior faculty members.

**1.5 Awareness about Concept of Induction / Orientation**
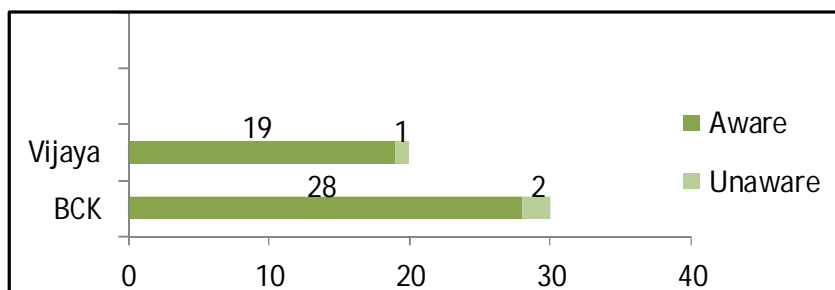
- Out of the total respondents, 93% at BCK and 95% at Vijaya College were aware about the concept of Induction/ Orientation.

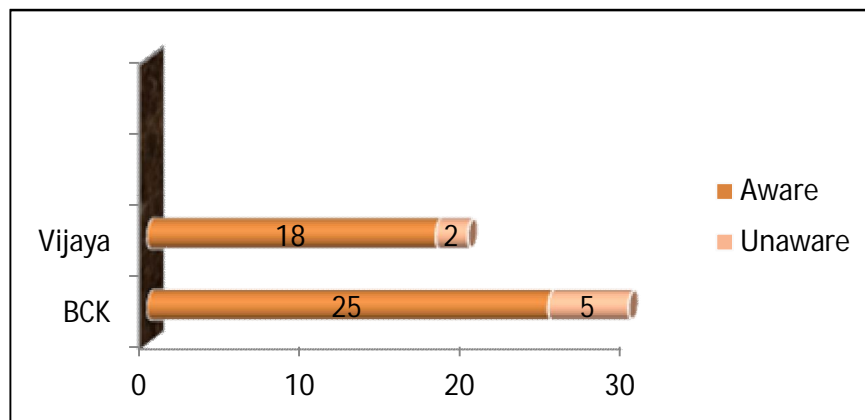**1.6 Need for Training in Educational Institutions**
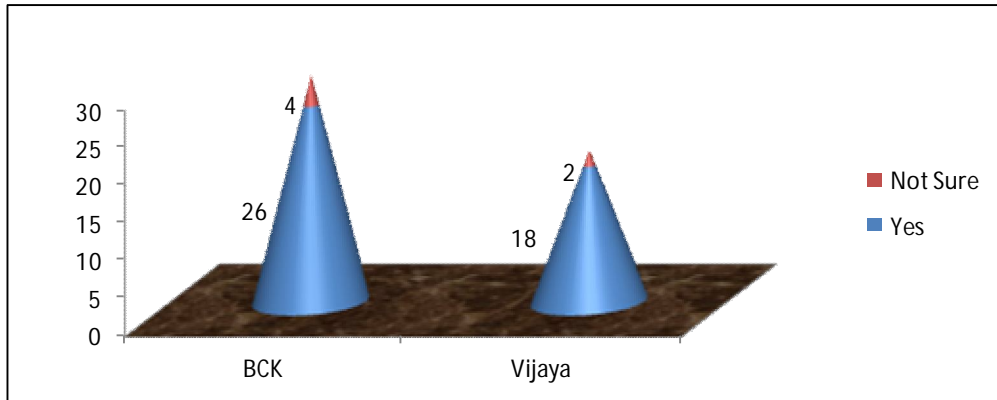
- Out of the 30 respondents at BCK, 87% felt that there was a need for training in educational institutions. At Vijaya College, 90% of the respondents supported the idea of training for new faculty members. Less than 10% respondents were unsure about the need for training.

### 1.7 Personal Experience with Regards to Training
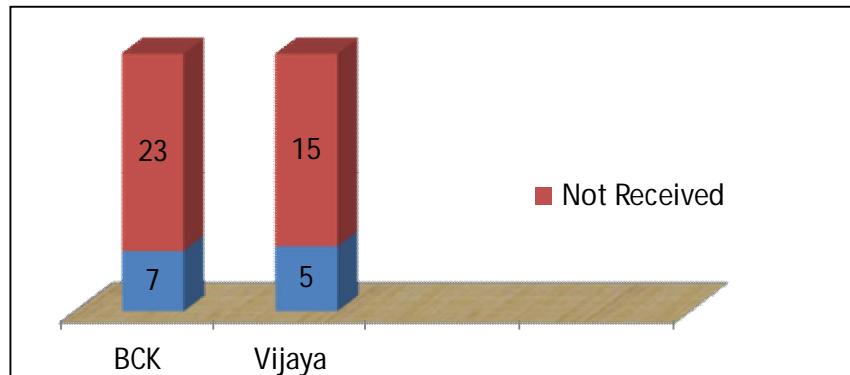
- Out of 30 respondents at BCK 77% had not received any training in their initial days. At Vijaya College out of 20 respondents 75% were not provided with any form of training.

### 1.8 Awareness about the Concept of Mentoring

- At BCK 84% and at Vijaya College 90% of the respondents were aware about the concept of Mentoring.

### 1.9 Need for Mentoring in Educational Institutions
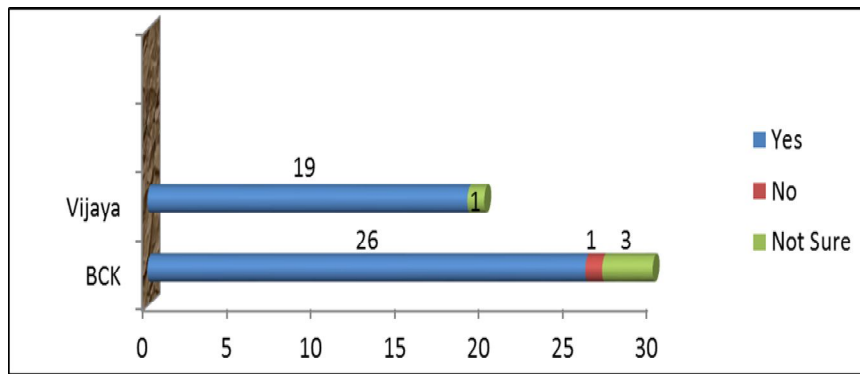
- Out of the total respondents 87% (BCK) & 95% (Vijaya) felt that there was a need for Mentoring in Educational institutions. Less than 10% respondents were unsure about the need for mentoring.

1.10 Need for Mentor
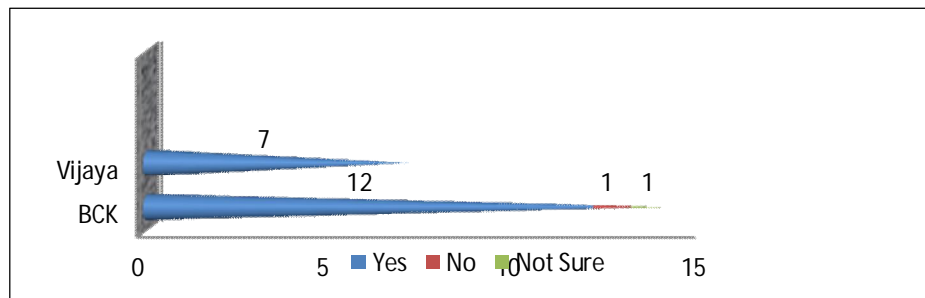
- At BCK, out of 30 respondents, 14 were eligible to be mentored, out of which 85% of respondents expressed a desire to have a mentor to guide them.
- At Vijaya College, out of 20 respondents, 7 were eligible to be mentored and all of them expressed their willingness to receive mentoring.

1.11 Willingness to be Mentors
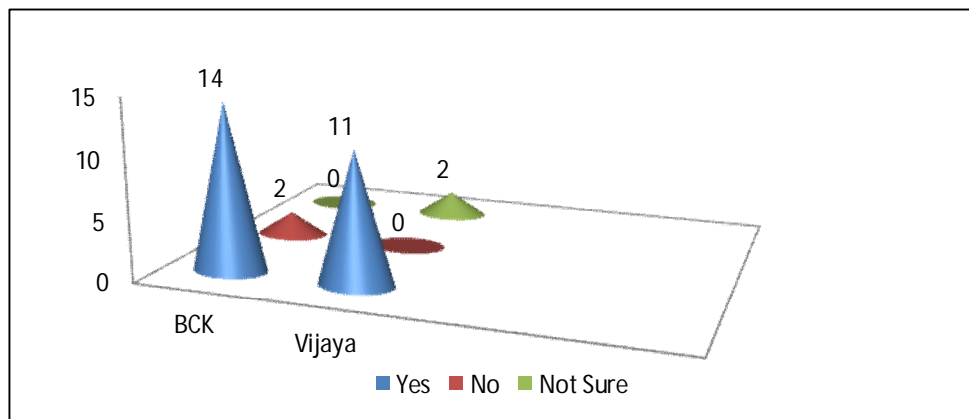
- At BCK, out of 30 respondents, 16 were eligible to become Mentors, out of which 88% of respondents were willing to perform the role of a Mentor.
- At Vijaya College, out of 20 respondents, 13 were eligible to become Mentors and except of two respondents, all others were willing to act as Mentors.

1.12 Areas where Mentoring can of Help

| Areas	BCK	Vijaya
Time Management	17%	12.5%
Managing Emotions	14%	11%
Problem Solving	16%	19%
Performance Enhancement	21%	14%
Healthy Work Environment	16%	17%
Work-Life Balance	8%	14%
Research Orientation	8%	12.5%
Total	100%	100%

- Out of the seven areas where Mentoring could be help in an educational institution, the respondents at BCK ranked Performance Enhancement (21%) as the highest, followed by Time Management. At Vijaya College, Problem Solving (19%) came out as the most critical area of help followed by creation of a healthy work environment.

1.13 Frequency of Mentoring
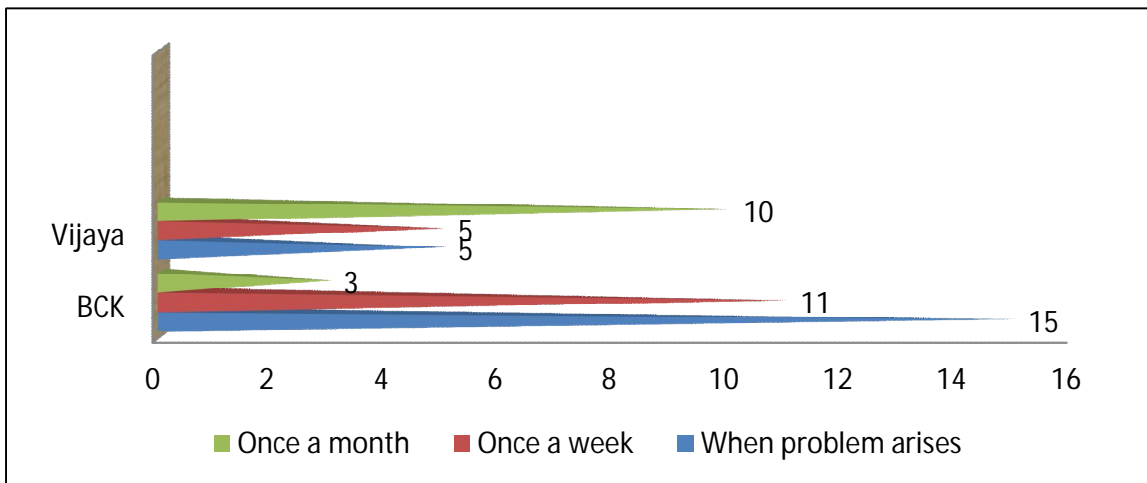
- At BCK, 52% of the respondents remarked that they would meet their mentor only when there is a problem, 38% respondents wanted to meet their mentor on a weekly basis and only 10% respondents wanted to meet their mentor once a month.
- Unlike BCK, 50% of the respondents at Vijaya College wanted to meet their mentor only once a month and there was an equal response of 25% who chose weekly meeting and meeting the mentor in case of a problem.

1.14 Ideal Mentor
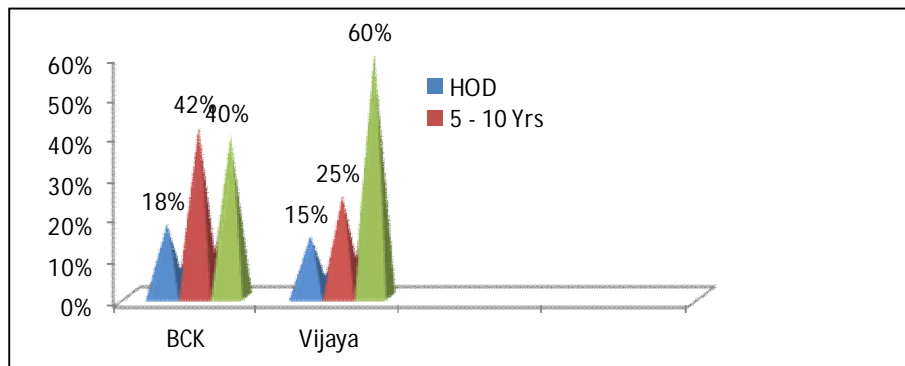
- The 42% respondents in BCK felt that faculty with 5 – 10 years of experience would be ideal for mentorship. In Vijaya College, 60% of the respondents recommended faculty with over 10 years of experience to be Ideal Mentors.

- Respondents in both the institutions placed Head of the Department as the third choice when it comes to being an Ideal Mentor.

7. Findings and Suggestions

The study conducted at both the institutions aimed at understanding the problems faced by new faculty in a rural, semi-urban and an urban set up. Teaching requires high amount of knowledge and skill and faculty members at both these institutions felt that there was a need to groom and train faculty members in the initial days of their career. Inspite of a variation in the societal set up in these two towns, the problems faced by new faculty members remained the same. The awareness about the concept of Mentoring among the teaching faculty at both these institutions was noteworthy. The support rendered by the faculty members at both the institutions in carrying out this study proves that there is a keen interest among them to bring a qualitative improvement in the knowledge delivery mechanism. Formal training programs could prove to be a costly affair; hence, college management could look at Mentoring as a substitute to training. Mentoring Programs require commitment of the top management and a team of dedicated & motivated senior faculty members.

Introducing the concept of Mentoring in the institution would be a Win-Win situation. For the new faculty, it would serve as an aid to improve their performance and acceptability in the institution. A mentorship may help a new faculty feel less isolated at work and encourage him / her to interact more with others. A mentor can provide a new faculty with tips on career growth and as the employee matures in his / her career, a mentor may remain a valued adviser to the faculty.

For the senior faculty who choose to be mentors, it will help in developing their leadership skills and also create a cordial working relationship in the institution. The opportunity to teach or advise others can increase the mentor's confidence and his / her own job satisfaction. The mentor is required to listen to the concerns of the new faculty and develop a better understanding of employee issues and stronger communication skills. Even if a mentored employee leaves the institution, the mentor and mentee may maintain a professional connection. This may expand the mentor's reputation and connections.

From the management point of view, introducing Mentoring would give the institution an edge in terms of competent and unified workforce which in turn would result in building a brand par excellence. Employers will also be able to bring down the attrition rate of employees as they feel a greater sense of loyalty towards the institution. An educational institution can even use its mentoring program to attract new employees.

8. Conclusion

Majority of the faculty face numerous problems in their initial days as a lecturer, however due to certain inhibitions they fail to share these problems with others. With time, they learn how to cope with these problems. When the new faculty members were asked whether they would have liked to have a mentor to guide them in their initial career, the answer has been in the affirmative. Hence, the concept of Mentoring in educational institutions if introduced would be well received by all the faculty members.

Mentoring is very crucial in the overall performance of the junior faculty. Mentors can facilitate by co- authoring and offering positive feedback in research projects, paper presentations, conferences and seminars. Mentoring helps in the retention of faculty by resolving conflicts at the infancy stage. The mentee can also add value by coming up with new ideas and approaches that can improvise teaching practices. Mentoring can also help the junior faculty in prioritizing his responsibilities like teaching, research, invigilation, valuation, paper setting etc. Mentoring would not only help in achieving professional milestones but also help in accomplishing a sense of camaraderie across departments.

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