

Leadership Development

Dr. Sarita Dhawale's Journey to Leadership

Background

Dr. Sarita Dhawale joined the Ashoka Education Foundation 17 years ago, stepping into the role of an Assistant Professor with a master's degree. Over the years, through continuous support, professional development opportunities, and a nurturing environment, she has risen to the position of Incharge Director at Ashoka Business School. This case study outlines her journey, highlighting how the Ashoka Education Foundation's policies and culture have contributed to her career growth and leadership development.

Initial Years at Ashoka Education Foundation

When Dr. Dhawale joined Ashoka Education Foundation, she was equipped with academic knowledge but sought practical exposure and growth opportunities. The Foundation's inclusive and supportive work culture provided her with the initial platform to showcase her abilities.

Support for Higher Education and Research

One of the significant milestones in Dr. Dhawale's career was the completion of her Ph.D. The management at Ashoka Education Foundation played a crucial role during this period:

- **Encouragement for Advanced Studies:** The Foundation's policy on professional development encouraged her to pursue her Ph.D. She was granted leave and provided with the necessary resources to balance her research and teaching responsibilities.
- **Financial Support:** The Foundation offered financial support for attending conferences and seminars, which enriched her research work and expanded her professional network.
- **Mentorship:** Senior faculty members and the management provided mentorship, guiding her through the complexities of her doctoral research.

Rising through the Ranks

From Assistant Professor to Vice-Principal

Dr. Dhawale's dedication and the quality of her work were recognized early on. As she excelled in her teaching and research roles, she was given additional responsibilities:

- **Leadership Training:** She was selected for various leadership and management training programs, which equipped her with the skills required for administrative roles.
- **Project Management:** She led several academic projects, which demonstrated her capability to handle larger responsibilities.

In recognition of her contributions, she was promoted to the position of Vice-Principal at the Ashoka Centre for Business and Computer Studies. This role allowed her to implement innovative educational strategies and manage a larger team, further honing her leadership skills.

Transition to Ashoka Business School

In 2019, Dr. Dhawale moved to Ashoka Business School as an Associate Professor and IQAC Coordinator. This transition was strategic, aligning with the Foundation's vision to utilize her leadership potential across different units:

- **Cross-Functional Exposure:** At the Business School, she was exposed to new academic disciplines and administrative challenges, broadening her expertise.
- **Collaborative Projects:** She spearheaded collaborative projects with industry partners, enhancing the school's academic offerings and reputation.
- **IQAC Initiatives:** Dr. Dhawale continues to handle the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) initiatives, driving quality enhancement and assurance processes within the institution.

Appointment as In-charge Director

In 2022, recognizing her leadership qualities and extensive experience, the management appointed Dr. Dhawale as the Incharge Director of Ashoka Business School. This position brought new responsibilities and opportunities:

- **Strategic Decision-Making:** She was involved in key decision-making processes, contributing to the strategic direction of the Institute.
- **Institutional Development:** Under her leadership, the Institute saw the implementation of several developmental initiatives aimed at improving academic standards and infrastructure.
- **Mentoring Future Leaders:** She actively mentors younger faculty members, fostering a culture of growth and learning within the institution.

Ashoka Education Foundation's Role in Leadership Development

Dr. Dhawale's journey is a testament to the supportive and growth-oriented culture at Ashoka Education Foundation. Key elements that contributed to her leadership development include:

- **Professional Development Policies:** Comprehensive policies that encourage continuous learning and professional advancement.
- **Mentorship and Support:** Access to mentorship from senior leaders and peers, fostering a collaborative learning environment.
- **Recognition and Rewards:** A robust system of recognizing and rewarding contributions, motivating staff to excel in their roles.
- **Opportunities for Leadership:** Strategic opportunities for taking on leadership roles and managing significant projects.



Ashoka Education Foundation's
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Conclusion

Dr. Sarita Dhawale's progression to the position of Incharge Director at Ashoka Business School illustrates how the Ashoka Education Foundation effectively nurtures and develops its internal talent. By providing a supportive environment, promoting continuous professional development, and recognizing potential, the Foundation not only advances the careers of its employees but also strengthens its institutional leadership, ensuring sustained growth and excellence in education.

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