



SKILL UP GRADATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY- A POSSIBLE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN DEVELOPING SKILLS AMONG THE GRADUATES

Dr.A.Vimala

Department of Career Guidance, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT

A quality human capital comes from a quality education process. A carefully designed and well planned education system is critical to developing such human capital. Thus, institutions of higher learning play a very important role and the teaching and learning processes in institutions should provide required knowledge and skills for future graduates. The Higher Education system in India grew rapidly after independence. By 1980, there were 132 universities and, 738 colleges in the country enrolling around 5% of the eligible age group in Higher Education. Today, in terms of enrolment, India is the third largest Higher Education system in the world. Though the enrolment increases but there is Skill shortage remains one of the major constraints to continued growth of the Indian economy. Too many young people in the India fail to gain the basic, employability and lower level skills needed to progress in work. In order to develop and fill the gap, the government and the universities and institution has to take necessary measures like industry institute partnership for curriculum preparation, faculty development and joint assessment and so on.

Key Words: *Government Initiatives, Challenges Of Higher And Role Of Universities In Skill Up Gradation And Development.*

Introduction

The prosperity of any nation is intrinsically linked to its human resources. Human capital is one of the most important assets of a country and a key determinant of a nation's economic performance. An increase in the human development index would lead to high levels of economic growth of the country. Adam Smith (1776) pointed out that a "man educated at the expense of much labour and time may be compared to one of those expensive machines" (Smith) and other classical economists observed that expenditure on education could be regarded as a form of investments that promised future benefits. The strength of a nation is dependent on its intellectual and skillful citizens. It can be observed that education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. Only a quality future human capital can envision development of its nation to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need. Without a quality human capital, a nation will be weak as there is no human factor that is capable to embark on new initiatives and perspectives. A quality human capital comes from a quality education process. A carefully designed and well planned education system is critical to developing such human capital. Thus, institutions of higher learning play a very important role and the teaching and learning processes in institutions of higher learning should provide such knowledge and skills to future graduates.

Literature review

The Higher Education system in India grew rapidly after independence. By 1980, there were 132 universities and, 738 colleges in the country enrolling around 5% of the eligible age group in Higher Education. Today, in terms of enrolment, India is the third largest Higher Education system in the world. Much of the state of Higher Education in the country can be attributed to the system of governance and regulation. Though the enrolment increases but there is Skill shortage remains one of the major constraints to continued growth of the Indian economy. Too many young people in the India fail to gain the basic, employability and lower level skills needed to progress in work. Current employment and skills systems in the India are neither fully integrated, nor sufficiently aligned to labor market needs. Insufficient supply of quality skills is one of the main impediments to further economic growth in India. The twenty-first century workforce has experienced tremendous changes due to advances in technology; consequently, the "old way" of doing things may be effective but not efficient. Entry level college graduates have not acquired the skills necessary for the workforce and, as such, are not prepared for the demands of industry careers (Peddle, 2000). The National Business Education Association (NBEA) stated that the shortage of skills confronting today's dynamic workforce goes beyond academic and hands-on occupational skills. However, the skill shortage is still one of the major constraints in most industries in India (World Bank, 2009b).

Research Method

This study was based on the data collected from Journals, articles, books, newspapers and web sites. It is purely analytical in nature.



Government Initiatives on Skill Development

To develop the required skills among the entry level graduates and bridge the gap between the industry and institute, government has taken initiation in the following ways;

1. National skills policy

The realization of this demographic dividend led to the formulation of the “National Skills Policy” in 2009 which set a target of imparting skills training to 500 million, by 2022. The Prime Minister’s National Council on Skill Development is an apex institution for policy direction and review. The Council is at the apex of a three-tier structure and would be concerned with vision setting and laying down core strategies. The Council would be assisted by the National Skill Development Coordination Board chaired by the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission which will coordinate action for skill development both in the public and the private sector.

2. The National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC)

The National Skill Development Coordination Board has been set up under chairmanship of the Deputy Chairman of The Planning Commission in the Public Private Partnership mode (PPP). It formulates strategies to implement the decisions of the Prime Minister’s Council on National Skill Development and also monitors and evaluates the outcomes of the various other schemes and programs for the council. It also develops appropriate and practical solutions and strategies to address regional and Social Imbalances, ensures quality control in Vocational Training and Education, monitors private participation strategies and helps put in place sectoral action plans. It has planned to set up 1500 new ITIs and 5000 skill development centres, across the country as well as a National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework (NVQF) for affiliations and accreditation in the vocational, educational and training systems.

3. The Modular Employable Skills (MES) and Skills Development Initiative Scheme (SDIS)

The Modular Employable Skills (MES) and Skills Development Initiative Scheme (SDIS) adopted by the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET), Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, provides a new strategic framework for skill development for early school leavers and existing workers, especially in the un-organised sectors, in close consultation with industry, micro enterprises in the un-organised sector, State Governments, experts and academia. The main objective here is to provide employable skills to school leavers, existing workers, ITI graduates and similar others. Existing skills of the persons can also be tested and certified under this scheme. Priority is given to those above 14 years of age, who have or been withdrawn as child labourers. This will enable them to pick up employable skills in order to be gainfully employed.

4. The Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T)

The Directorate General of Employment & Training (DGE&T) had the initiated Craftsman Training Scheme in 1950 by establishing 50 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) for imparting skills in various vocational trades to meet the manpower requirements for technology and industrial growth of the country. And the scheme was initiated with an objective of improving the quality of vocational training in the country to make it demand driven so as to ensure better employability of the graduates.

5. Initiatives of Ministry of Rural Development

The Ministry of Rural Development has launched schemes that aims at empowering young people from the poor and weaker sections of the society through schemes like “Special Projects for Placement Linked Skill Development of Rural BPL youth under SwarnaJayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana(SGSY-SP) with an objective of ensuring time bound training aimed at bringing a specific number of BPL families above the poverty line through placement services. And Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institutes (RUDSETI) were launched with an objective of setting up a dedicated Skills development infrastructure in each district in the country aimed towards entrepreneurial development.

6. Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation

The Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation had launched the Swarna Jayanti Shahari ROZGAR Yojana (SJSRY) in 1997 to address the Skill development issues of the urban poor. The Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) had been comprehensively revamped in view of addressing the drawbacks observed in implementation. The revised guidelines had come into effect from 1.4.2009. The three key objectives of the revised Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY) are:

- Addressing urban poverty alleviation through gainful employment to the urban unemployed or underemployed poor;



- Supporting skill development and training to enable the urban poor have access to employment opportunities provided by the market or undertake self-employment; and
- Empowering the community to tackle the issues of urban poverty through suitable self-managed community structures and capacity building programmes.

Challenges of higher educational system in India

The biggest challenge of the higher education system in India is to produce a quality and skillful graduates to meet the requirement of the labour market. The skills glut seemed to have turned rapidly into a severe shortage. Understanding of these emergencies, the UGC stated: "The University has a crucial role to play in promoting social change. It must make an impact on the community if it is to retain its legitimacy and gain public support". It seeks to do so by a new emphasis on community based programmes and work on social issues. Apart from this the higher education India is struggling in inadequate infrastructure and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions and poor faculty, truncated student enrollment, outdated teaching method, less concentration on research, lack of motivation of faculty and students, lack innovative curriculum, lack of recognition on new sectors of employment, grooming private institution without meeting the requirement and lack of understanding on world of work

Role of Universities in developing skills among the graduates

Universities and institution has to play a vital role in responding the government initiatives on skill development of young graduates. In order to meet the labour market requirement and to bridge the skill gap the university and the institution can take initiatives in the following aspects:

1. Designing skill and need based curricula

Universities has to create a common platforms to bring higher education and industry together to design skill based curricula in the discipline of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce, as well as from the various professional disciplines such as agriculture, law, management, medicine and engineering. This kind of curricula will address the requirement of the employer and also this will impart knowledge of the present scenario among the graduates. After their placement they need not undergo longer period of training and even the industry can also realize their cost cutting method of improving the economic status.

2. Skill Development Initiatives from Formal to Informal Sectors

Informal sectors like vocational courses, ITI and certain diploma courses are possessing 90 percentage of skills in their discipline. Whereas formal sectors not yet to meet the minimum percentage of skill in the curricula designed in their respective discipline. So, the institutions can also move to the model of informal sectors to formal sectors to equip the skilled graduates.

3. Industry institute Partnership

Higher education institution should link with the industries for designing new curriculum, internship, faculty development, Industry-institute collaboration, students skill assessment, joint hands of research and development, on the job training to both students and faculty member to know the current technologies and its applications. This is possible through the signing MoU with the industries. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs.

4. Train the Trainer (TTT)

The primary action of the skill development is to train the trainer. When the faculty of the respective discipline has trained, they in turn will train their ward. It is the pedagogical expertise of the trainer which ensures that the learner gets a wholesome experience, understands the standards and is fully equipped to apply the concepts learnt during his employment. The Training of Trainer hence becomes a major challenge. Much of the TTT is right now dependent on government infrastructure and institutions. As per the NSDC report on Education sector there is an incremental requirement of teachers and trainers to meet the huge demand of skill among the young graduates. To meet this it is recommended that, the state and central government can assist fund to the institution to train the trainers.

5. Innovative Research Practices

Encouraging the innovative research projects among the faculty and students will enhance their qualities. By offering incentives for the best research and the contribution to the respective discipline and society also will be more helpful in



developing their skills. Innovative research practices will enable the students and faculties to gain a higher level knowledge about the workplace culture and the work-related skills needed to lead and facilitate Practice Development and through this, continuous improvement and innovation. Typically, the successful learners to go onto enjoy an increased sense of well-being including enhanced resilience, a more varied working life and are more prepared for leading and engaging with continuous improvement and innovation in the workplace.

6. Technology Forecast

The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. It offers opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances. Though efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research innovation- growth linkage.

7. Concentration on International Collaboration

Understanding the world of work is emerging environment for the students and the institutions. The universities or institutions has to tie up with the international companies/universities with long term agreement on crating global workforce, knowledge sharing, technological hunt and mentoring model to share the real experience of successes and failure. Now a day a PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model is famous for bringing the platform for the skill development among the academicians and the graduates in the form of doing project and gaining high skill among the entry level graduates. International collaboration will cultivate the understanding fast changing skills demands, attracting FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in Skills, promoting business to business (B2B) partnerships among the native and the international companies and this will encouraging multinational corporations to provide skills solution.

8. Fair Quality Assurance System

Colleges and Private institutes should set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell and must follow a minimum standard to give degrees. The quality assurance system must be independent of political and institutional interaction and it must have a basis in the legislation. There should be Operational, financial and academic autonomy coupled with accountability. There is a need of an independent accreditation agency with a conglomerate of government, industry, academia, society etc. means all stakeholders of the education to ensure that the stakeholders particularly the students are not taken for a ride. They should be able to know whether a particular institution delivers value or not, then things can be under control to some extent. It is also important that all institutes of higher learning must make public the acceptability of their courses and degrees.

9. Industry -Institute Curricula Involvement

Universities are now increasingly recognizing the value in recruiting professionals as guest lecturers, 'giving students greater awareness of real life work issues to round out their theoretical knowledge (Hogg (2004: 4). As learning under these initiatives involves analysing and reflecting on experiences in both the classroom and the workplace. The institutions may link with the industries in term of curriculum preparation. Cent percent industry involvement is not possible; at least forty percentage of interaction and involvement of industry in the curriculum settings will address the issue of skill mismatch between the industry and institutions.

10. Bridging the Skill through Generic Attributes

The term generic attribute refers to an underlying characteristic - encompassing competency, skill, knowledge, trait, value, capability and ability - used to contribute to the community on a professional or societal level in a range of different contexts. The West Review (DETYA 1998) provided a framework of attributes which should be developed in every graduate attending an higher education. These comprised technical competence and a set of generic attributes including, but not limited to: critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, communication skills, information management skills team working skills and high ethical values.

11. An Hour Teaching

Allotting an hour in the regular time table will address the half of the issues. In order to equip the students, the institutions must start coaching in term of aptitude and career readiness at the stage of first year of graduation. Generally, colleges start coaching in the beginning of final year or before the placement. This kind of effort is not bringing bright footfall in the recruitment. So students and the institutions are ready to take part of an hour will surely bring successes in skill development and bridge the gap of skill mismatch.



Conclusion

The shortage of appropriately skilled labor across many industries is emerging as a significant and complex challenge to India's growth and future. Increasingly, it is being felt that there is a large skill gap. This can be reduced gradually by initiating and taking vigorous steps. Join hands to create a pool of industry best practices to maximize learning for all. The best solution is to increase the collaboration between industry and academia to tackle the skill gap problem. Diversification of curriculum, novel courses, optional papers based on choice based credit system and training teachers in logical thinking and English aptitude skills are essential to develop the skills among the young graduates.

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