What Ails Higher Education in India…

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Skilled, Qualified and Professional Human Capital has always been the biggest challenge for not only the corporate world, but also varied countries of the World.

It’s a proven fact that the best and most progressive organizations and countries depend on their Human Capital rather than any other resource, since all other resources can be automatically generated by the qualified Human Capital.

India, though one of the emerging economies and powers of the world, but it has a long way to go given its population, which is mammoth, whose potential is still to unleash due to lack of quantity of enlightened, educated and Trained Human capital.

For this to happen, the basic, primary and especially the Higher Education in India has to be relooked so that we can make the nation to be the super power of the world.

If one looks into the varied aspects, planning and policies of the country, it would be evident that very few steps are being taken on Human Capital Development such as Education, Training and life long learning!

It is really absurd situation of India that most of its educated citizens are unemployed!!

There are about 41,000,000 people are registered with the employment exchanges, but unemployable, as they have no skills or inadequate or obsolete skills or irrelevant skills!

Another 260,000,000 Indians are available in the age group of 16 years to 50 years, who are NOT registered with the exchanges; most of them are under employed / illiterate or sick and / or unskilled in any skill or vocation. Because of lack of relevant skills they are NOT employable.

Presently hardly 2% to 3% of our work-force is formally trained in relevant skills, mostly in the organized sector, compared to about 96% in S. Korea, and 60% to 80% in the EU & USA.

Some of the facts like thought there is a great demand for the people from varied sectors like IT related business, Financial Services, Hospitality, Travel Industry, Construction, Retail, Manufacturing, etc, but they are not able to find right employees to be recruited due to lack of skills required.

The higher education system of any country plays a very crucial role in the development of a nation in view of its forward linkage with the corporate, as well as, society at large. It is a human capital intensive sector where people and knowledge mean everything. With gradual liberalization and globalization of Higher Education, the challenges before the higher education system are immense.

All concerned citizens of the country have to realize that it is only a robust, innovative and bright higher educational system that can help in transformation of India among the league of developed nations.

Education is a process which deals with man's inclusive progress which has a direct impact on making one a civilized, skilled, wise and employable. In ancient times there was “Guru Kula” system in India, where the education was imparted to the students with utmost devotion, care, concern and great emphasis used to be given to shaping the character of the students.

But, now in the modern era, the entire education system is taken for a toss, in the wake of commercializing education delivery, the whole concept of the Guru Kula has become a business entity with a profit motive and students are treated as customers.

This commercialization of education system has adversely affected the student community as well as world at large. This is making a ruckus among the select few sensitive academicians and industrialists, who are disturbed by this. They are trying their best to bring back the glory to the education system.

They are have been conducting discussions on this in many forums and apex bodies for the same and trying their best to do something for the issue of credibility of higher education.

This new commercial approach adapted by many educational institutions has done away with the basic essence of academics and is having a vicious affect on the society and the country. This customer approach to the students has made higher education institutions concentrating less on academic orientation. They have gradually forgotten that students are investing their time and money with a
purpose in mind, the purpose is gaining knowledge and awareness, which is now being given a back seat.

Let us look at one of the most popular Post Graduate programmes, MBA, which is usually looked up by the students as an entry into the glamorous corporate world. In India the primary problem lies in the very insight of higher education, both on the part of the giver and the receiver. The scenario is such that the majority of students enroll for MBA look at it as a passport to bag an 'ideal job', they even forget to think what is expected of them as a student itself, forget about Management Student.

On the flip side, there is an ever growing pressure from industry to make their fresh inductees productive from day one to reduce the subsequent training costs, since they are not keen to invest time and money, since the industry needs are huge and it is a time consuming process, which may not be cost effective at least on the short run.

Corporate today are looking for trained professionals and students competent of taking decisions from the very day they are into their jobs, and they expect the B-Schools to do the preparatory work for them, which seems to be reasonable.

INDUSTRY – ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIP

The need of the day is the Industry – Academia partnership, where they both work together for shaping the future minds of the country. There has to be a common interface model between academia and industry that is away from the Supplier and Consumer.

If there has to be a win-win situation for the entire stake holders then, this relationship calls for some partnership as the consumer i.e. the industry has to ensure that the output of the Supplier - the educational institution satisfies the needs largely.

One easy way to improve the interface between both the parties is through collaboration, which is more in the nature of a feedback loop, where the onus of the honest feedback rests with the industry, it is for the industry to provide inputs back to the academic institutions regarding their perception or evaluation of their products i.e., the students. This kind of interaction requires creation of a platform which makes the system robust. The industry needs to pitch in with some special insights in the curriculum, certain dimensions suitable to the present scenario and practices by designing some joint programs. This means customizing the programs to some extent, to suit the needs of the industry. The academia should work in tandem with the industry for the same.

Role of Research

There has to be a continuous research in the both academic and industry, which is aimed at enhancing the human capital. The research can help service the constant demand for upgrading quality, lowering costs, and creating more value.

This can also help develop new approaches for solving problems and decision making, which the engineers and managers may not be able to do. One suitable, easy and practical way is to bridge this gap by the initiative from the industry, which can invite academicians who may have an interest in some specific areas useful to the industry also to seek solutions for their problems.

The academician can spend their time, knowledge and energy and industry may facilitate the academicians with facilities, which would result in enhancing the body of knowledge.

The academia industry interface would also ensure that the issue of what is being taught, losing its credence from the syllabus coverage and practice.

The education system should focus on making students aware that morality is not an issue only when problems arise but it is Individual responsibility and social welfare which is a part of the institutional backdrop.

Conclusion

Let us look into what has been done in last few decades on this issue, since even after 60 years of independence, we have failed to provide work-oriented and ethics oriented education to our youth. The reality is it that while we are apprehensive of our GDP growth we are failing to realize our shortfalls in creating versatile and sensible managers and entrepreneurs, damaging the future of our Country.

Let us all stand together to build a strong educated nation with deep roots in moral, ethics and character.

References

