



Quality of Education to contribute towards making India educated and employable

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Under the purview of Indian Constitution, free and compulsory education is a Fundamental right children aged 6 to 14 years. In India, Education is provided by both public sector and private sector jointly wherein funds flow in from all the three levels – central, state and local level.

By 2011, Indian has made a remarkable progress in terms of increasing the primary education attendance rate and contributing to bandwagon of Literate India. India's improved education system can be attributed to its economic development.

In the field of Higher education – Institutes such as Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Science and University of Mumbai with respect to their standards of undergraduate education, have been globally acclaimed in the field of engineering. Besides these some of the global accomplishments awarded to Indian Institutes include: Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, and Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2005 and 2006 appeared in the Times Higher Education List among the world's top 200 universities; The Indian School of Business, Hyderabad as per the rankings by the Financial Times of London, was ranked number 12 in 2010, in the medical line, All India Institute of Medical Sciences has been recognised as a global leader in medical research and treatment.

Quality of Education

In recent years, a lot of emphasis has been laid down on improving the Education quality. It is well understood by all that the Quality needs are to be improved. However the question arises on what does the Improvement in quality of Education actually mean and what steps would contribute towards its

improvement?

A. If we talk about quality aspects in schools, the factors that can bring in real change in the overall school environment would include: Managing the class size; child enabled teaching-learning practices, relevant teaching learning materials, regular assessments, teacher training and upgradation of domain knowledge, overall professional development of teachers, leadership among the school heads/administrators, parents counselling, availability of basic and healthy school amenities and evaluation mechanism for measuring development of students, teachers and overall school system.

By addressing these school-level factors can make a significant difference to the quality of school environment in terms of student attendance and retention, managing gender issues, adopting different learner cycles and ensuring community participation.

B. In terms of higher education, there are challenges with respect to faculty not being trained, gaps in taking pace with rapidly changing technology, outdated syllabus with few modifications, gaps in linkages with the employment market, lack of imparting training on employability skills.

For instance let us consider a student who undergoes four year Graduation course- B.Tech, at the end of four years he/she acquires the knowledge in every subject however is that sufficient to work as per the requirements of the industry? Is that student job ready? The answer is definitely no. This is the problem with our current education system.

We are moving towards educated but unemployed India. As per the industry Report, there are more than 487 million workers in India. However over two-third employers complain that their people don't possess the right kind of skill. The real challenge is how to get best out of its people through amalgamation of education and training. In the World's Economic Forum, India ranks 78th out of 122 countries. It is being observed as per the Industry Report that most people who join the workforces either hold the certificate or degree but don't have the right training that is needed to succeed in

the Industry. This accounts for one of the major concerns for our country where in as high as 80 percent people join the workforce every year with lack of skill related training.

The Institutions fall short in delivering these Skills in terms of 'Application of Theoretical principles'. Unless Learning is 'Practiced', the impact would not be as desired. For instance till the time we practice driving we would not be able to drive confidently on roads and highways merely by reading a driving book or by mugging up traffic rules.

C. Vocational Education - Even in case of students passing out of vocational education streams/ ITIs don't possess the employability skills that are in sync with the Industry needs. This increases the challenge of being sustained in the jobs for the larger period of time. There is huge instability in the jobs that leads to unemployment.

This mainly arises out of the fact that companies can train new recruits on the technical knowledge but the soft skills and employability skills are those that one needs to possess for performing suitably on the job.

Steps taken in this direction

A. To improve the Quality of Education, it is important to develop soft skills that leads to personality development, from the initially years of life at home and at school. It should be developed as a habit that is practiced over years to make it a person's integral part of life.

Though there are institutes offering short term personality development courses for shorter duration, however such course would have limited effect if the foundation is not strong enough. It is for this reason that soft skills training impacts in differing degrees, depending upon the educational and social background of the candidate.

It is with this understanding that vocational skills are now being introduced in class IX with Level-1 under NSQF and goes up to Level-10.

B. In continuation with skill based education, based on a research there are nine core skills which helps an individual to be successful both at work place and in personal life. They are

1. Communication Skills
2. Team Work
3. Problem Solving
4. Self Management
5. Planning and Organising
6. Technology
7. Ability to Learn
8. Initiative and Enterprise
9. Life Skills

The focus of skill education should be on imparting training on developing these skills along with the domain knowledge. The true essence of education lies in performing effectively at work and in personal life and being able to deal well with others in society.

C. Train the Master Trainers- As estimated by the Industry Trends by 2020, 25 per cent of the total international manpower employed will be Indian, and hence, there is immense requirement in bringing in developing vocational training in India to an International standard for higher mobility. To improve the quality of output churning from these trainings requires enhanced trainer and assessor courses that would support the Education and deliver quality results.

Hence there is requirement for Training of Trainer Courses w.r.t Training Delivery, Student Management, Student Counselling,

Industry Awareness and Technology Enabled learning aspects.

D. Increase in Public Private Partnerships: With respect to the Industry data that only 10 per cent of the workforce has any vocational training, formal or informal, steps are being taken to address this. Plans are in place to develop Skill Development Centers through Public Private Partnerships, revamping the existing ITIs / polytechnics.

In the Year 2013 itself, the number of ITIs have increased from 2,000 to approx 10,000. But what holds true is that with the rising capacity of these Institutes, the quality also suffers, there have been complaints from the industry with regards to the quality of the trainees, there is limited capacity to regulate Private ITIs. With objective of training 50 million people every year in order to meet the target of training above 500 million people by 2022 (NSDC and Govt of India Mandate), requires a paradigm shift from a government-driven approach to a private sector-driven one.

E. Adoption of International Best Practices: Few Sector Skills Councils promoted by CII have shown keenness to learn and adapt best practices from Australian Industry Skills Council. Germany and China represent best and successful examples of vocational education training systems of the World. For instance under the Chinese Vocational Education Model – more than half of the children completing nine years of Compulsory School education enter the vocational education in Senior Secondary level. They emerge highly employable at the end of three years as out of these, one year is spent in Practical Training in Industry. In this manner they train their human responses for skilled and semi skilled task.

F. Steps are being taken by the New Government in line with the New goal of 'Make in India' initiative wherein the labour ministry has decided to set up 12 Advanced Training Institutes (ATIs) across the country in the first phase at a cost of ₹200 crore to train vocational instructors. The plan is part of the 'Make in India' programme which aims to transform the country into a best-in-class manufacturing hub and places strong emphasis on skill development.

As India progressively moves toward becoming a 'knowledge economy', it has become imperative for its work force to acquire and upgrade skills that are relevant in the emerging Economic Environment.

Today only 25 per cent of the Graduates are considered 'employable' by Employers. Hence this is a huge task for our Education System to bring in the transition in the role from 'Student' to 'Worker' and preparing the candidates for the new working world. The major component during this transition phase is 'Application and Adaptation' of theoretical learning in the real world. The need of the hour is deeper connect between the Academia and the Industry. The Products of the Education Systems are employed by the Industry. Hence it is in the mutual interest of both the parties to contribute effectively and jointly in development of market ready 'Employees'.

Lastly, Education and Training has to be from the Learner's perspective. The shift needs to take place from 'Teacher oriented learning styles to Learner oriented learning styles'. This calls in for change in the teaching/training pedagogies that suit the student's requirements, their preferences and backgrounds.

These are the steps that would improve the Quality of Education and contribute towards making India Educated and Employable.