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A Shift from Teacher Oriented to Student Oriented Learning

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Thursday, January 22, 2015
Print Forward

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Kamini Prasad, Chief Operating Officer

Most established firms and organizations today consider only 25 percent of graduates as "Employable". The big question that arises is what happens to the other greater denomination of 75 percent? In an industry, which is liable and subject to change due to frequent shifts and trends in the business, a 100 percent employable workforce base is essential to hold the proper structure in an organization. The shortcoming of such disproportional supply and demand coordination creates a major challenge to the industry. A greater proportion of the challenge comes due to lack of "Employability Skills". As a result an individual's ability to conduct in the work environment in terms of communication, presentation, interpersonal skills, and team working does not meet the desired levels.

This gives rise to a huge task to our Education System to bring in the transition in the role from "Student" to "Worker" and to prepare candidates for the new working world. The major component during this transition phase is "Application and Adaptation" of theoretical learning in the real world. At the institutional level it is the responsibility of the institute to groom students for corporate life. Transition from college to corporate life is indeed complex and intense. Though there are institutes offering short-term Personality Development courses for shorter duration, such courses would have limited effect if the foundation were not strong enough. To improve the quality of education, it is important to develop Soft Skills that lead to Personality Development, from the initial years of life at both home and school. It should be developed as a habit and practiced over years to make it a person's integral part.

In terms of Higher Education, there are challenges with respect to various attributes such as faculty not being trained, outdated syllabus, gaps in linkages with the employment market, lack of imparting training on employability skills. 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.

Even in case of students passing out of vocational education streams, do not possess the employability skills that are in sync with the Industry needs. This increases the challenge of them being sustained in the jobs for longer periods of time. 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.

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Before setting up the academic calendar, the focus of any educational institution should be on understanding the current market trends, the student's preferences, the job market – industry employer's requirements and overall competition in the market. These trends should be studied so as to understand job requirements, Industry expectations from the fresh graduates, nature and kind of skills students are expected to develop, and the nature and quality of Faculty. At the same time it is also important to understand the nature of other academic institutions and what courses, duration and pedagogy is being adopted by them. All these market knowledge and trends would be of immense use in aligning one's curriculum and programs to the current industry requirements.

Hence the need of the hour is a deeper connection between the Academia and the Industry. It is in the mutual interest of both the parties to contribute effectively and jointly in development of market ready "Employees". There has to be an approach in imparting training needs to be "Practice oriented instead of Theory focus". The practical way can be adopted by encouraging the students in applying Learning in their day to day personal lives, discussions around real life business / industry cases and so on.

Final year students should focus on the kind of profile/ job role they are getting in an organization instead of focusing on the big names of the industry. In the initial years they need to develop their careers, learn and work harder to understand the How's and Why's of corporate work. Freshmen should aspire to join an organization where the profile suits their expertise and skills. It must be a place where there is potential to grow professionally in the long run. One should go with an open mind and constantly "learn-unlearn-relearn" and practice in all spheres of life, to sharpen the abilities and build efficiency.

Education today 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 shift calls for change in the teaching/training pedagogies that suit the student's requirements, their preferences and backgrounds; all in parallel functioning with the industry.

Kamini Prasad

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