

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

EMERGING ENABLERS IN EDUCATION FOR CORPORATE EMPLOYABILITY

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**DR. Harpreet Singh, Harjeet Kaur, EMERGING ENABLERS IN
EDUCATION FOR CORPORATE EMPLOYABILITY-Palarch's Journal Of
Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(9), ISSN 1567-214x**

ITRODUCTION

India's population is huge and is fast expanding and is changing rapidly into the globalised economy. India is among the 'young' countries in the world. However, presently only a fraction of the total workforce in India has undergone formal skills training. India has a great opportunity to meet the future workforce demands of the world and is also emerging worldwide sourcing hub for skilled workforce, especially in the fields of information technology, construction and agriculture to name a few. Education cannot to be straitjacketed with schooling. It involves formal as well as informal training through experience of life. Schooling is a planned and organized learning process. Skill building can be viewed as a methodology to improve the effectiveness and contribution of workforce to the overall production. The pace of growth and quantum of changes in Indian socioeconomic growth is exerting huge pressure on the Indian education system. It will have to develop an appropriately skilled workforce that can meet the ever-changing human

resource requirements industry is creating. These are ambitious targets that demonstrate an awareness of the need for significant change. Consequently India is fast becoming a global hub for talent. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for an education system to respond to these challenges quickly and in the right ways – particularly in a country as large and as diverse as India. The education system is struggling to address significant issues around basic skills.

So much of discussion is going on these days on Skill development. Let's first understand what are Skill Gap and Its impact. A skills gap is a significant gap between an organization's current capabilities and the skills it needs to achieve its goals. It is the point at which an organization can no longer grow or remain competitive because it cannot fill critical jobs with employees who have the right knowledge, skills, and abilities.

METHODOLOGY

An open ended questionnaire was given to teachers and pupil teachers (B.Ed. students) to identify the emerging focus areas for our formal school education system which targeted emerging gaps, education themes, value of formally recognized education and various other parameters as given below. After getting the responses, a content analysis was done qualitatively to summarize the findings. The responses of 50 school teachers and 50 pupil teachers were recorded and analyzed.

Similarly, 50 employers were asked for expectations through open ended questions.

EMERGING THEMES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

The focus areas emerged out of identified emerging themes included the following:

a. Acquiring soft skills

Softskills are important especially after entry of MNCs in India, the vital skill elements in the ongoing development of the workforce include good communication skills, the ability to work in a team, confidence in your own ideas and the capability and attitude to continuously learn.

b. Self learning enabling education

Self learning ability is important as the skill demands are changing fast. It is unreasonable to expect formal education to provide individuals with all the technical and functional skills any employer would need. It is necessary for students and employees to have a passion for selfdevelopment. The companies are ready to spend on their training if they exhibit passion for self learning and are ready to respond to corporate training.

c. Value of legally recognized education

The industry academia gap is clearly visible. The output of formal education system is not readily worth absorbing in corporate world as talent gaps emerge. A lot of education (particularly vocational) is seen as too theoretical with not enough of a connection to the workplace. The employers are expressing trust deficit about formal education.

d. cross-cultural differences

The emergence of the concept of “Knowledge Economy” has thrown culture driven challenges, the important one being the involvement of young women work force in a traditionally male dominated society. Rapid growth and unprecedented change has created some new cultural issues. The male society is not acceptable for men to be ‘subservient’ to women managers. There is therefore a general need to develop a trained people who have the ability to deal with cross-cultural issues.

e. Focus on the creativity

The education which focuses on theoretical concepts without utility in practice has no meaning these days unless it enhances creativity. There should be a greater emphasis on creativity and innovation. The cognitive ability is a capital asset in modern corporate world these days which schools should focus at. Some changes are taking place in further and higher education where the focus is more on educating for employability.

EMPLOYERS’ EXPECTATIONS

After Exploratory Factor Analysis, the following categories of expectations were identified. The following expectations were recorded and are mentioned rank wise for their needs:

Core Enablers	Personality Enablers	Social Skills Enablers
Multi-tasking	Creative and innovative	Honesty and integrity
A desire to learn as per emerging needs	Ideas generation and ability to share	A great team worker
Strive to accuracy in work	Knowledge of the work area (domain)	Being Passionate
Decision making	Self-responsibility	

Most of the respondents felt that the core skills may not be taught formally, but can be improved with practice under professional guidance. The personality enablers can be acquired and modified by knowledge and reflection. The personality attributes are commonly referred to as attributes than skills, though they are technically skills in practice. The social skills are values driven acquired informally through social interactions at family level and at workplaces. There was an agreement among respondents that the social skills are imbibed from others and therefore workplace culture is important ingredient.

IMPORTANCE OF ENABLERS

The growing emphasis on identified enablers to be made a part of formal education in higher education has several sources. One is the increasing evidence of demand from business and employer organisations for graduates to possess enabling skills. There are also various economic, technological and educational arguments that have brought enabling skills to wider attention. The contemporary focus on enabling skills is really part of a bigger, as yet unresolved, debate about the purpose of education and how to develop well educated persons who are both employable and capable of contributing to society. Where employers can find this

‘skill’, it is presumably on the basis of inference from other areas of an applicant’s life.

Focus on industry recognition of knowledge and skills

True, scoring in exams is most important! Perhaps, it is the only way to prove to the world that we have the right qualifications in different subjects. But, these marks and GPAs alone don’t help us getting the right jobs. Again we are confronted with the gap between what the Degree or Diploma endorses and what is expected from the industry in terms of levels of accomplishments in various skills.

Skill based learning in schools and colleges for holistic learning

Holistic learning is all about the right mix of knowledge and skills. It helps in improving our abilities and enhancing the competencies. We don’t have the luxury to pursue education for its own sake. All of us want Degrees and Diplomas to get us well-paying, professionally satisfying jobs or prepare us for meaningful self-employment. This can be achieved only when there is awareness and respect for skill based learning in high schools and the options to mix and match vocational skills with popular subjects within the scope of the prescribed curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Rather than solely focusing on much sought after salary figures and high paying jobs as the goal of all education, we need to quickly address the root cause of skill deficit by promoting a learning culture and a curriculum that emphasizes on enhancing productivity, efficiency and performance. This can be a good starting point to convey the significance of skill based learning. Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled human potential. Increase in quality of work has direct relation with productivity, which in turn is connected with skill availability of the workforce. In this context, it is necessary not only to create quality employment but also to equip such quality employment with sufficient skills. Active participation of women

should also be in consideration. According to one report of UNDP, if women's participation reaches at a level of 70 percent then we could increase our economic growth rate by 4.2 per cent. To create awareness among the society and give some knowledge how skill based education can help in productive employment. For bringing awareness among the society government have to take some policies and make some awareness camp. Government should provide required materials for vocational training and also should give interest on making industries, schools, colleges etc where vocational training should be provided. It is also important to include vocational or skill based education as a regular curriculum courses for students. Be it school/university education, NSDC, NSDA, NSDF, NSQF, ITIs , polytechnics or the multi-faceted industrial setup of India, all have to come at one place with single goal of extending quality education and skill development to every Indian citizen and their deployment at suitable place of work.

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