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ROLE OF STAKE HOLDERS IN DESIGNING THE CURRICULUM

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“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” - Nelson Mandela.

Abstract :

Education is the driving force to bring about changes in the economy in every century. Information dissemination has become much faster in the 21st century and resulted in more awareness, sophistication, specialized skills and deeper insights in all aspects. In this Knowledge age the economic growth is directly dependent on the human capital. So as to build the intellectual capital the traditional knowledge imparted in schools and colleges about various subjects needs to be made application based rather than just information based. The students who learn to apply rather than simply reproducing information on tests will be able to deal with real world challenges, will develop the ability to think critically, communicate effectively and adapt to change easily giving them a greater edge in work and life. Applied skills have to be aligned with academic curriculum and cannot be taught in isolation.

This paper evaluates the role of each stake holder in the society i.e. the University, college, corporate, student group, research/training and development organizations and government in developing a value based curriculum which is not only application specific but will also impart the most required skills: critical thinking, application of advances in technology, teamwork, creativity and innovation which are essential for the students to face real-world situations.

Introduction :

The formal educational system of schooling/college involves teaching and learning through a predefined curriculum of various disciplines. This kind of system confines the learning and knowledge of students just to textbooks as the performance measurement is quantitatively judged through marks. A successful educational system can achieve high rates of economic growth only when the curriculum followed in schools/colleges creates a constructive learning environment. Such a learning environment should aim to teach and develop the following skills:

- Integration and interpretation of information
- Cognitive development
- Problem-based learning
- Develop interpersonal skills
- Lateral and creative thinking
- Self-monitoring
- Communication skills
- Understanding advances in technology and its usage
- Handling crisis situations

Such curriculum design would help the student to develop the broader competencies and are important for success in an ever changing complex and demanding world. To translate the above thinking



into practicality the conceptual framework of curriculum in schools/colleges needs to be redesigned through collaboration among all the stake holders who are directly responsible for the functioning of an effective educational system in the country.

India has already proved to produce the best of intellectual capital, but questions related to quality, access, and equity still challenge educational planners. In addition to this, a recent study titled Effective Education for Employment (EEE) by Edexcel stated that there is a huge mismatch between what is being taught in schools, colleges and universities and the knowledge, skills and behavior businesses and organizations are looking for, in new recruits. Even students felt that their education lacked relevance to the jobs they were hoping to apply for in the future which reinforces the missing element "linking education to careers".

2.0 Role of each stake holder in the society:

Considering what is missing in the current educational system based on the above discussion, following is the expected role of each stake holder in developing a value based curriculum for delivering practical education:

a) Role of a University: As an institution not just for higher education but also for research, University should serve as an interface between academicians and Industry. The research & development should meet industry and social needs. It should promote innovation and evolve pedagogy for development of teaching staff and their continuous learning. The content should be in relevance to social requirements. Personality

development should be given equal importance. The University's main aim should be to develop learner-centric curriculum so that the students are prepared to meet the challenges in the industrial world as well as personal life. The University should develop more interdisciplinary courses and allow flexibility for students to opt for various courses if they have the aptitude. The university should streamline extra-curricular activities and make students participation mandatory. Such initiatives will ensure all round holistic developments of every student.

b) Role of a College: Rather than just delivering lectures as per the curriculum guidelines colleges should regularly assess the psychological makeup, additional skills which students possess and conduct regular career counseling sessions. Forming Parents –teachers association should be made mandatory in every college and the parents voice should be given due importance. Student- faculty exchange programs should be held which ensures knowledge creation through research. Regular events, fests should be conducted, the responsibility of which should be given to students so that they design the ways to build the brand of the college.

c) Role of Corporates: To recruit educated, trained and healthy manpower is the essential ingredient for the corporates to sustain and maintain a stable work environment. To achieve this the corporates need to make a step further by working with schools and colleges to ensure quality education and employability. The corporates need to partner with educational institutions and facilitate skill based training, apprenticeship opportunities, internships

and project work so that students get hands on practical experience. The corporates should also participate in curriculum designing and encourage students to involve in their Research & Development at different levels based on their competence. The corporates should participate in the teaching process and design faculty development programs. Some leading Information Technology majors such as Infosys, Wipro, Cisco, Autodesk have developed interactive practical programs to impart the desired skills at the college level for students. For example, Dr. Reddy's Foundation's Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS) works towards assimilating its students into the competitive job market, it also helps them acquire the required livelihood and social skills in an environment of learning and mentoring that is responsive to the student's emotional and developmental needs.

Such success stories now need to be scaled-up in association with other corporates to make a sizeable impact on the system. For a country betting on its demographic dividend, these kinds of partnerships help build scale.

d) Role of Teachers: They play a key role as they are they are knowledge disseminators and they are the mode through which the curriculum of a subject is directly delivered in the classroom to the students. The teachers are expected to orchestrate the classroom of students who are different in understanding levels, pursuing different questions in mind about the subject and having varying attention span. Above all the present scenario demands teachers to be facilitators and their main task to set goals to make the learning process

organized. The teacher is expected to follow a core curriculum of the school but the way it is delivered should ensure that national curriculum standards are met. This should make the student perform well at higher stake assessment level also. Considering all this a teacher is expected to do careful planning and try out different pedagogy, refer different teaching materials to demonstrate and deliver a standardized curriculum in the most simplest and understandable format to the students. Since the teachers play a vital role in the education system they should be given an opportunity for curriculum designing. Considering the technological advancements the teachers must be able to select, adapt, or design technology-enhanced materials that meet the needs of students. Technology-enhanced curriculum often place new demands on teachers' subject matter knowledge and nearly always require them to take on new roles as curriculum designer, team builder, and coach.

e) Role of Student Community: A students should play an active role in education rather than being just passive. It is also very important to read ahead of their teacher, try to participate in class activities. The students need to acquire skills, reflect on experiences, experiment and should provide feedback on state of education. The advances in technology have made the student's job easier. The advent of computers and internet is helping the student community by providing them information just a click away. Students should understand that mere use of google information will not help them in any way but inculcating regular reading habits will not only help them to improve their communication skills but also helps them build associative thinking

and creative intuition.

f) Role of Government: The government should develop policies to ensure every child gets avails free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age. The government should take the responsibility of financing education, especially basic education as education is the critical tool to become economically and socially strong for any country. Special responsibility for girl child and Women education by developing vocational training should be taken up. Designing a separate curriculum for the handicapped section of the society which will help them get financial freedom. Overall the system of education should be redefined to make it more skill based. The government should take special initiation to design plans to strengthen national patronage to encourage more youngsters to join army and serve the nation. The government should propagate and promote studies related to ancient Indian culture and national art. Prominence to Sanskrit, Hindi and other important languages in particular as these languages have emerged from the roots of Indian culture. Therefore it is the responsibility of the Indian government to preserve rich cultural heritage of our country and pass it on to future generations as a source of inspiration. Apart from the above initiative the government should collaborate with parents and corporates for developing required competencies among the students.

g) Role of Research Organizations: There is a need to encourage development of research organizations for each specialized field of professions which are emerging. This is the time to

display renewed enthusiasm to promote research in higher education to pave way for further development. The research organizations should create learning modules of strategic importance on current industry trends and disseminate information to students. This will help the students to gain practical insights about the subjects which they are learning. The research organizations should develop dialogue with teachers and students and enhance their knowledge by encouraging them to involve in research. The research organizations should also focus on developing innovative teaching methodologies, creating of new methods of Training and Development for students of different age groups and socio economic background.

3.0 Aligning Technology into educational system

In this Knowledge economy brining about a practical change in the current educational process without the aid of technology is impossible. Therefore educational reforms call for a shift in the instruction pattern followed in higher education. Apart from an organized instruction in the form of class room instruction, the students should be engaged in long term, meaningful projects. A significant support of technological advancements such as Computers, internet facilities, Science and research lab should be adopted by the educational institutes. Such Technological support will help the students for constructive project based learning. The curriculum pattern should revolve around involving meaningful practical tasks which are generally multifaceted in nature. The complexity of the tasks will make the students to work in groups resulting in teamwork and collaborative skills. The challenging issue is the difficulty in implementing such

technology at all levels of education. The school going children belonging to economically weaker section can learn such advances only when the government facilitates grants to implement such technological advancements.

4.0 Other Recommendations:

The roots of current educational system in India should be made stronger so that economic, political and social stability is achieved. To achieve this government must assume the responsibility of financing basic education. The government should explore diverse ways to finance educational services. The current educational system in India is governed by multiple governing bodies such as chambers of commerce, business organizations and employer associations but all of them work independently. There is a need to take a bold and timely response which allows us to take a giant leap to expand our educational systems and incorporate the skills required in the 21st century into the curricula. We should encourage public-private partnerships of educational institutes, encourage foreign educational institutions to enter into India, initiate independent accreditation rating system, and give greater autonomy in governance to the educational institutes.

A comprehensive road map should be prepared to amend this changes and accordingly curricular and assessment reforms should be brought in. The other challenges of integrating latest technology, training and development of teachers to address the skills gap should also be reviewed.

5.0 Conclusion:

The end goal for effective curriculum design is to systematically improve the quality of education by helping the students to gain knowledge, practical insights, and adaptation to latest technologies. It should also aim to achieve the objective for the bringing about an overall cognitive development of student which will help them to think critically, self evaluate, enhance their lateral thinking skills, improve upon their communication skills, team work and handling crisis situations. To create this kind of sustainable pool of human capital high commitment, collaboration and involvement of each stake holder of the society is the need of the hour as quality education is the passport to opportunity and prosperity.

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