

REENGINEERING IN EDUCATION: A STEP TOWARDS EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The paper highlights the changing expectations of industry in terms of skill-sets required to fulfill their job vacancy and the resultant impact on employability. It gives a brief about role of higher education of management institutes in developing the required skills-sets so as to make students employable. And to enhance employability, the paper focuses on bringing re-engineering in education.

Keyword: - *Education, higher education, management education, re-engineering, education system, employability*

1. INTRODUCTION

Erstwhile, the scope of education and its impact in the life of a person was often overlooked. The terms like reformation in education system, restructuring of educational process, re-engineering, employability, and so forth were rather unheard in education sector. But with the boom in global competition and increase in industry expectation the lacuna in the present education system comes into the spotlight. Change in the economic scenario, emergence of new technology, societal norms and culture, increasing awareness about diverse career prospects, etc. are some of the other factors which are highlighting the need for re-engineering in educational sectors and bring about a complete transformation. Today, education not only meant to develop learning ability among the students, but it carves their potential to be employable in future. The Higher education institutions, therefore, should realize their responsibility towards this transition from education to employment. There is a need to raise the standard and quality of academic knowledge delivered to the students in the classroom. The challenges faced by student in the current business scenario are completely different from their predecessor. Resultantly, the traditional ways of imparting knowledge are no longer useful and effective in the context of globalization.

One of such research conducted on behalf of Association of Graduate Employers in 1995 had concluded that unemployed graduates felt “short changed” by higher education institutions failed to anticipate the changes that were taking place and as a result they lacked in the essential skills required for the employment (despite having ‘good degree’). The research thus proved that

education is the stepping stone for life-long learning and employability.

It is now one of the biggest challenges for education and industry to decide on the content of the course offered by the institutions to the students. The paper thus presents new paradigm in the educational sectors including novel concepts, frameworks, and theories that aim to transform education. It will provide a broad perspective on implementing educational reforms, trends in educational sector, and the challenges faced in re-engineering education to enhance the employability among students.

1.1 The Concept of Re-engineering

Re-engineering is an organized and systematic process of reinventing the newer and improved ways of performing a job or a task. It is based on the premise of constructive destruction where organizations discard the older techniques of working and thrive for more efficient ways of performing the same role. It is a process to review the traditional ways and rethink on how to do it better so as to reduce the cost and enhance the efficiency. The key to re-engineering is continuous development and deployment of more sophisticated techniques and bring innovation in the organization.

Re-engineering aims to enhance both efficiency and effectiveness in the processes. As the paper targets educational sector, we will highlight the need for re-engineering to bring transition in the society through education:

- Due to Innovation in various professions, trades, or businesses the need for education in the society too is changing to suit the innovations
- To exploit the learning opportunities which are in sync with contemporary lifestyle and individual responsibility
- To avail the opportunities presented with the emergence of digital technology to make learning interactive and innovative
- To enhance the performance of people by exploiting their potential

Re-engineering is thus like an intervention which creates a disequilibrium in the society so as to bring changes. It not only aims to change the way learning and education has been provided to the students but make them employable.

1.2 Employability: Meaning

Employability refers to possession of required skills, abilities, knowledge, attitude, competencies, and understanding that makes new graduates ready to enter into the job market and make productive contribution towards organizational objectives. According to one such study conducted to find the expectations of employer from the graduates belong to engineering and science background came to the conclusion that appropriate work experience and the level of commercial understanding are the two important selection criteria. (Mason, 1999).

From the perspective of **Hillage and Polard** (1998), the capability of the individuals to move self-sufficiently in the labor market to exploit their potential through sustainable development, defines the term employability. Thus, the term employability is rather a broader term which comprise set

of skills like communication, numeracy, knowledge about technology, etc. required not only in employment but throughout the lifetime.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to identify need for restructuring curriculum and to identify important skills of management graduates which require to address those challenges, the effectiveness of management programs in developing those skills in graduates which will have its impact on employability of management graduates, noting potential gaps in the management curriculum and possible strategies to resolve gaps.

Education is one of the most important factor for growth and progress of any nation. It helps the people to respond to the changing needs. Except for primary and secondary education, higher education is the vital for change. Higher education plays an important role in preparing leaders which in turn will help to directly or indirectly to create wealth of a nation.

Heavey and Morey (2003) according to them management graduates needs to acquire different sets of skills to manage their own working career and those skills will enable them to continue learning throughout the work lives. Hence it is important that management students as per they potential should understand the best skill set and according help oneself to enhance those skills to manage their professional careers.

Lonice Morley (2007) identifies that educational experience and process contribute the development of employability skills, qualifications and competencies. It means that the knowledge gained by the management graduates through their academics should be so effective in such a way that skills and qualifications result into development.

Mason et al (2009) states that structured work experience involves designing course and ability to deliver clear positive effects to secure employment in graduate level job. It also tells impact on labor market performance and states that there is no evidence that emphasis given by University to teaching, learning and assessment of employability skill has vital effect on labor activities.

Adriana E Stoica (2010) in her paper she expresses the main reason of study is to develop comprehensive employability skill framework and to see that whether any gap exists with regards to important skills for a successful employability. It tells about better skills with quality of employers.

Rajkumar Paulrajah (2011) the aim of the study is to understand the requirement of the skill set for jobs and to develop employability skills required for sustaining employment. It concludes the mix of academic qualifications, vocational and personal skills for entry level jobs. Employers are looking for people for managerial jobs with different skill set of factors such as academics, communication skills, work experience, teamwork and leadership skills.

3. ROLE OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN EMPLOYABILITY

Within the university, the education provided to the students should ensure the development of certain generic skills to enhance their employability, like, problem-solving skills, team working skills, knowledge about the working of the organizations and how people in the organization perform their jobs. Management education should help in developing skills that are required to

face the real work-life challenges. Henry Mintzberg (1973) has identified three broad categories of managerial activities and the respective roles and skills of the manager, as specified in **Table 2**. The role of management education is thus to develop those skills and make them capable enough to perform such role effectively and efficiently.

Mintzberg Managerial Roles			
Category	Roles	Activity	Examples
Informational	Monitor	Seek and acquire work-related information	Scan/read trade press, maintain personal contacts, etc.
	Disseminator	Communicate information to others within the organization	Send memos and reports, inform subordinate of decisions
	Spokesperson	Communicate information to outsiders	Participate in meetings and report progress, reports and information materials
Interpersonal	Figurehead	Performs social and legal duties, act as a symbolic leader	Greet visitors, sign legal documents, solicitations, ribbon cutting ceremonies, etc.
	Leader	Direct and motivate subordinates, select and train employees	Includes interactions with subordinates
	Liaison	Establish and maintain communication both within and outside the organization	Business correspondence, participation in meeting with representatives of other divisions
Decisional	Entrepreneur	Identify new ideas and implement new projects	Implement innovations, plan for future
	Disturbance Handler	Deals with disputes and take corrective action	Settle conflicts between subordinates, overcome crisis situations,
	Resource Allocator	Decide where to apply resources	Draft and approve of plans, schedules, budget; set priorities
	Negotiator	Defends business interact	Participate in and direct negotiate within team, departments and organization

Table-1.1: Mintzberg’s Managerial Roles

The roles thus defined specifies that management education provided in colleges and universities should ensure that the student get sufficient opportunity to experience and apply such skills to create solution to business problems. Thus, colleges should adopt an appropriate curriculum and

teaching pedagogy to produce employable individuals. Some of the example of potential teaching pedagogy and course curriculum in context to Mintzberg’s managerial roles are as follows:

- To teach them the role of monitor and skills required for it, the course curriculum might include topics related to organizational structure and dynamics and teaching pedagogy may include team teaching by cross functional faculty member
- The role of disseminator can be taught by including English language and comprehension in the course content and conducting interactive sessions along with written exercises
- Leadership skill development programs, simulation exercise, role plays, etc. could be used to make them an effective leader
- To develop their ability so as to handle organizational disputes and conflicts, the combination of physical and mental work with deadlines could be provided to them. They could also be given live projects and case studies to develop decision-making skills
- To teach them optimum allocation of resources, the course content should include topics related to resource optimization and team working and management skills. The teaching pedagogy might include entrepreneurship exercises and projects

3.1 BARRIERS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN GENERATING EMPLOYABILITY

Management education is important is failing to produce employable individuals. The gap between course curriculum and the industry expectation is huge, thus even the graduate and post-graduate degrees are insufficient in bridging the gap. With the rapid economic growth, the demand of skilled manpower has increased manifold in India, but the fresh graduates though have degrees fails to justify their skills. And that is the reason most of these graduates are finding difficulties in finding and getting in India. **Fig. 2.1** highlights percentage of employers who are experiencing difficulties in filling job vacancies in India.

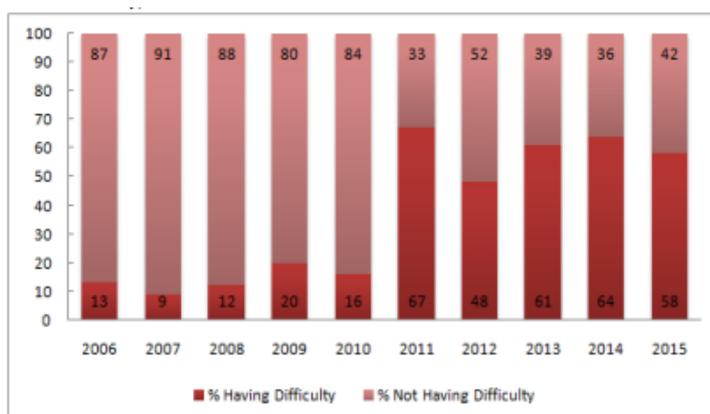


Fig. 2.1: Percentage of Employers Facing Difficulty in Filling Job Vacancies

Source: ILO

As per the report of HRD ministry, India has approximately 6214 engineering and technology institutes who are enrolling 2.9 million students. Among this, 1.5 million students enter into the job market every year. But the revealing fact is that the higher education in India ensures that they

do not have any employability or the adequate skills required to be employed. In one such study conducted by Delhi-based employment solution company, Aspiring Minds, on employability-focused study, it was found out that 97% of graduating engineers (year 2013) are looking for jobs in software or core engineering. But only 3% have suitable skills to get employed in software engineering and 7% in core engineering.

Source: India Today, July 13, 2016

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/engineering-employment-problems/1/713827.html>

Some of the reasons which are proving a hindrance in filling this gap and making it difficult for organizations to find the suitable candidates are as follows:

- Lack of adequate infrastructure in educational institutes
- Lack of industry or practical exposure among faculties
- Post-dated teaching methodology
- Outdated course curriculum
- Lack of knowledge among faculties regarding technology
- Lack of awareness among students regarding role of learning and education
- Lack of industry exposure to students
- Traditional method of evaluating student grades and performance
- Minimal collaboration and communication between management institutes and industries
- Lack of mentoring to students
- Causal attitude of students during internships
- Lack of soft-skills session in institutes, resulted in poor communication skills

3.2 Techniques to Improve Employability

Looking into the current scenario, it is crucial to work towards improving the employability so as to bridge the gap between industry and education. Today, the skill-sets required by industries have very high standards. Along with the traditional skills, they are now looking into more sophisticated skills like:

- Leadership skills
- Emotional intelligence
- Entrepreneurship
- Problem-solving skills
- Digital literacy
- Analytical ability
- Rational decision-making, etc.

And, thus to develop such skills management institutes should bring restructure their course curriculum. They should take efforts to prepare students for real industry exposure and make them employable. Following are some of the ways to improve employability:

- Organizing Faculty Development Programs (FDP) for faculties so as to update their knowledge and skills

- Increased focus on developing soft skills among students through conducting soft skills development programs in the institute, organizing brainstorming session in classroom, etc.
- Case studies should not only target Indian markets, but the global environment
- Rigorous internships (which could extend for more than 2 months) and submission of project reports
- Use of modern teaching aids like PPT, audio-visual session, group discussion, etc.
- Taking advantage of skill development programs organized by Government
- Vocational training

4. EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH RE-ENGINEERING IN EDUCATION

Re-engineering, as defined, is adopting newer ways of doing the same task. In context to education, the re-engineering mechanism is like an intervention which helps in boosting the employability. It includes application of innovative method in developing skills among students so as to make them employment ready. Instead of using traditional ways to transferring knowledge, it includes use of technology to make learning more effective and long lasting. Thus, reengineering in education involves three steps as depicted in the **Fig. 4** below.

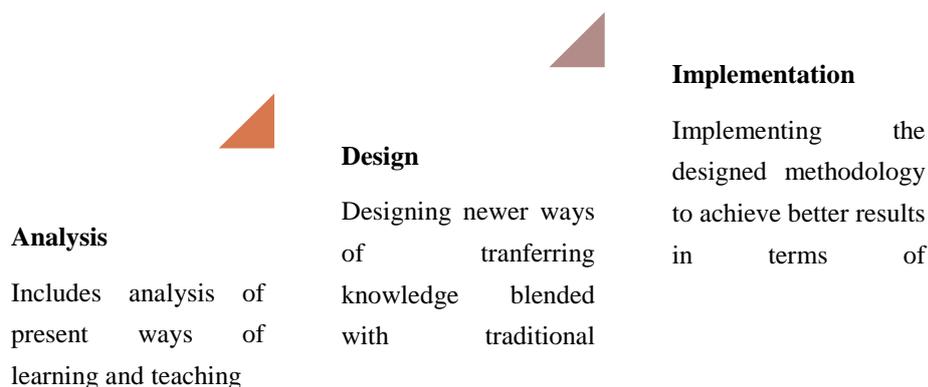


Fig. 2: Process of Reengineering in Education

4.1 Steps in Re-engineering in Education

A well-designed learning methodology and educational programs thus provides significant advantages to the learners/ students, faculties, and institution. Restructuring of education and molding students as per the industry needs is the need of the hour. And this can be done by adopting pedagogical innovation and industry-academic interface through reengineering mechanism. Re-engineering efforts in education involves certain steps as mentioned below:

- Determination of specific educational need that can be met through developing educational activity
- Designing and developing curriculum to specify scope, content, and structure of proposed activity

- Listing the element in terms of topics, modules, or exercises required for the activity
- Deciding learning objectives and expected outcomes
- Analyzing the educational background, time available for learning, and location of proposed learner/student
- Defining and acquiring material, media, and methodology to design each learning unit
- Specifying additional resources and technology to be adopted to enhance learning
- Development of an efficient management and administrative system to support learning initiative
- Contacting and sourcing people from outside world with real corporate experience to share their insights
- Providing adequate learning and training opportunities to faculties and providing them with incentives

4.1 Re-engineering Initiatives

The process thus involves clarity in vision, mission, and philosophy of the management institutes. It should not only targets one specific course but aims to bring a holistic development of all. Following are some of re-engineering initiatives which could improves the educational system and employability:

- Creating an awareness among students related to their priorities during selecting a course
- Clearly defined mission and vision statement of institutions along with the pre-determined goals
- An effective teacher learning and training process to develop more maturity, intellect, and honesty among them towards students as well as institution
- Restructuring the selection process in management institution to enhance suitability and sustainability of future business managers and leaders
- Faculty development programs to enhance their knowledge, skills, and teaching methodology
- An attractive compensation and good working environment for the faculties
- Restructuring of teaching pedagogy with more focus on practical application of concepts
- Redesigning the course content to align it with industry needs and requirements
- Promoting the concept of industrial internships and interaction of industry people with students
- Collaboration with industry and their experts to design the course curriculum and concepts

5. CONCLUSIONS

To encapsulate, the paper described the role of education in enhancing the employability among young graduates. It focused the biggest challenge i.e. gap between industry and academic and how to fill the gap by reinforcing re-engineering process in the education. It says that by improving the teaching pedagogy and course curriculum by collaborating with industries and the experts, we can produce more employable individuals. But at the same time, the paper also highlights the need

to create awareness among youth regarding the role of education in their lives and encouraging them to take sincere decision. Thus, if efforts being made in brining innovation and change in the learning and teaching mechanism, India can take advantage of its 'Demographic Dividend'.

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