

EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: The term employability can be simply defined as the ability of a person being employed. In literal terms not everybody is employable as a graduate. Only those possessing the skills that enable themselves to get employed are called employable. Any prospect in this regard needs to have certain special skills. Employability as a whole is a complete package of one's own intelligence and interaction in the given situation. On the one hand when some graduates who may have the technical skill set to find a solution to a particular problem may not be able to communicate the solution in an appropriate manner while on the other hand a good communicator or the one having good people skills may not necessarily be good at finding a technical solution. Heretofore just being a good academic cannot alone safeguard your employment status but a good perspective on real-life business situations can cement one's position as an employable candidate. There are only a few students who are committed and persevere to find a job of their own choice. However, a vast majority is forced to take up underpaid jobs in marketing and sales in sectors like the KPOs. Ergo, the need of the hour is equip students not only with theoretical skills but also help them specialize in their chosen field be it technology or commerce through multi-disciplinary project-oriented approach that encompasses practical training on all aspects. Thus, this paper throws light into the concept of employability, skills required to be employed as well as the impact of employability in the present educational environment.

Keywords: Employability, Skill Development

INTRODUCTION

The year 2001 saw the heinous melt down of jobs in India. The dotcom-led slowdown battered the IT sector which was later followed by a Lehman-led plunge in the latter half of the year 2007 that curtailed nearly half of the jobs offered by the engineering sector. Nevertheless, the quality of graduates born out of the universities is exacerbating the scenario. Employability can be defined as "a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that makes any candidate more likely to get employment and be successful in their chosen occupations which benefit themselves, the workplace, the community and economy". An employable graduate is defined as the one who can apply the skills learnt during his undergraduate period, who can communicate his thoughts professionally and understand the work, thereby helping the organization to reach its peak through his own skill. The skills that a candidate owns is not a content scaled out merely during the undergraduate years but a bag pack consisting of the innumerable qualities boxed and unlocked simultaneously during the school years. Ergo, poor school education could trigger a class war of unimaginable dimensions. A poor school education could annihilate the country's workforce beyond recognition. The key that unlocks the treasure of an employable candidate is therefore a good quality school education.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To understand the Schooling system in India.
2. Implications of Schooling during higher education and its counter-productive effect on Employability.
3. To study pros and cons of Employability.

METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

Primary and secondary data has been collected. The secondary data collection has been done from Books, Newspapers, Magazines and the Internet.

Primary data has been collected from teachers, students and the placement cell.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The number of students in sample selected was 50.
- Data collected was not sufficient to undertake statistical applications.
- Only percentage and causation technique was applied.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The reasons for graduates being employable or not are many. On one side Kiran Mazumdar Shaw feels the graduates are not industry-ready due to the lackadaisical institution training in technical skills which engenders a skill gap, on the other side Raj Chetty considers school education is what is more essential which shapes the life of a student in the early stages which bridges the gap later on in the individual's life. Moreover, the ability of a student cannot be judged by the academics or the marks the individual scores during the three-four years of the his/her graduation. The vice chancellor of the university of Delhi correctly points to the handicap in the education system.

EMPLOYABILITY

The term employability can be simply defined as the ability of a person of being employed. The skills that enable a prospect to get employed are called employability. Any prospect in this regard need to have certain special skills. Employability as a whole is a complete package of one's own intelligence and interaction in the given situation.

The astounding statistics of how, of the 1,100 students who applied to a multinational corporation only three students were getting selected, delineates the murky predicament of the graduates coming out of the Indian Universities. The vice chancellor of Delhi University points to this by saying, "India is sitting on a time bomb." The aforementioned fact surely behooves us to think of the danger of depleting jobs. Nasscom, McKinsey and TCS also confirm that barely 20% of India's graduates are employable. The vice chancellors resolve this problem by changing the university curriculum. The Human Resource Development Ministry proclaimed this change by introducing four-year degree course set to be implemented from July. The logic was predictable: the American 12+4 pattern has become the norm. However, the logic does not provide an answer to the lackadaisical employment structure in the country. Although, this would probably bring a scintilla of change it is not likely that the proportion of change would have an enormous impact so as to erase the venom of unemployment. If the main intention behind adding an extra year to the undergraduate courses was to facilitate India's globalization, it can be said to involve an acceptance of a new world order. Fundamentally, this change would better prepare the minority of students who choose to pursue post-graduate courses abroad. On the downside, the curriculum would become more intimidating to those who are disadvantaged by indifferent schooling. The majority of the students who wish to finish their graduation and work in the Indian markets would always prefer a faster means to get them to the job of their choice. Without any doubt the rigorous and more exacting form of education would prepare the students to adjust to the US campuses. This conflict between quality education and mass education is inevitable.

The unceasing problem of a skilled individual begins almost 12 years before the student enters the university. The place where the student checks in as a soldier getting ready to begin a battle- The school. The battle being, a fight within himself to be a better citizen of tomorrow, the battle turf being the ladder of education. If these ten or twelve years of schooling pushes the student to an abyss of rotten junk, the 3 to 5 years of university education cannot be expected to be an antidote to cure the irreparable scar.

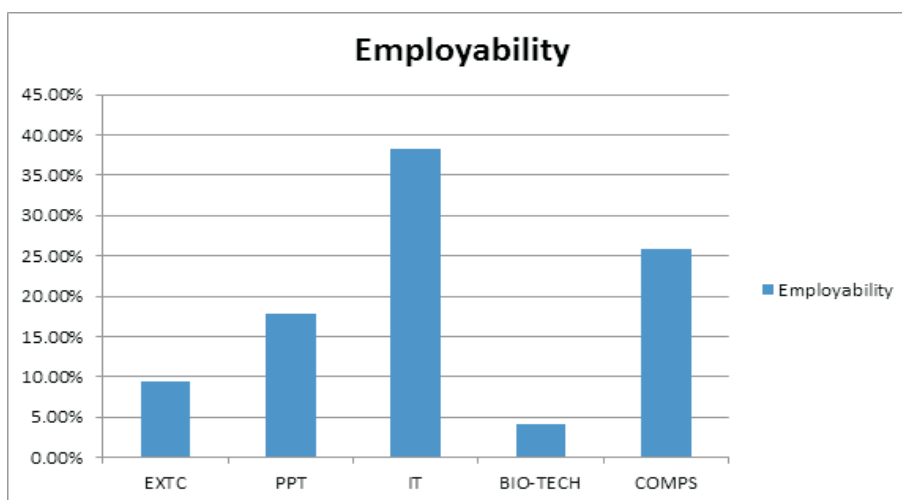
The very first survey conducted by the Business India magazine on IITs and IIMs in the latter half of 1980s corroborated the existing menace of improper and poor quality school education. According to the analysis of data collated over 3500 IIT and IIM students showed that almost 95% of the students came from upper middle class families or even upper caste families. Such students got the benefit of better schools and even better pre-school education. In due course poor families were left in the lurch as they got neither.

Another survey of 34 schools in Northeast Mumbai suggested the same. Only privately managed English medium schools were chosen so as to normalize the sample base. Students in Std VI and VII were put to test. The test being simple English and Mathematics. The questions of Math being, "arrange the numbers in the correct order". Out of the sample size of 16,500 students , 65% failed in Math and 75% in English. The cause assuredly is being the poor quality education. The fact that mortifies the most is that these were the privately managed English medium schools and not the municipal or rural schools.

A survey conducted by the author in the institution revealed figures very similar to the above and the reasons were puzzlingly the same.

Sector(ENGG.)	Employability(in %)
EXTC	9.5
PPT	17.80
IT	38.20
BIO-TECH	4.20
COMPUTER SCIENCE(COMPS)	25.90

Table no.1



1. The department of Electronics and Telecommunication (EXTC) showed a staggering amount of only 9.5% employable candidates. This is not just because of technical skill gap but also because of the lack of communication skills.
2. The department of Printing and Packaging (PPT) which is perhaps the only branch in the institution that is unique compared to other such institutions showed a 17.80% of employable candidates. As the skills possessed by the individuals of this department are quite unique the percentage of students getting absorbed was more. Also, the companies coming to recruit were purely based on technical abilities of the student.
3. The department of Information and Technology(IT) had the highest employable candidates. Over 38.02% candidates were considered employable. The students had the advantage of being an IT graduate, as this sector has grown over time and the companies recruiting were mainly stressing on coding and software designing unlike the other core departments.
4. A sharp fall in the employable candidates was seen in the Biotechnology department(BIO-TECH). Only 4.20% students were employable. Companies were looking for students with knowledge about the evolving biotech developments like the DNA biometrics, retinal, fingerprinting technology and life sciences.
5. The department of Computer Science (COMPS) had over 25.90% candidates who turned out to be employable. The reasons for being employable were very similar to the IT recruiting companies.

Thus, the quality of school education simply determines the unrelenting force with which the student puts himself in the tornado of opportunities that arrives eventually. Hence, a good school education can be directly ascribed to presence of a good teacher. The inability to attract good teachers is certainly evident. Relatively poor salaries, little recognition for merit-based promotions, humiliating working conditions and little protection against violence by anti social elements have blown away the good teachers into other professions. Various other surveys across Indian States by well known NGOs like Akshara and Probe produced astounding results. Queerly, failure rates in Bihar were lowest. A logical answer would be – presence of Good Teachers. Thus, even though Bihar's economy has suffered, there are more number of students entering the IITs and the Indian administrative services. The focus must be on school education in order to prevent difficult circumstances later on.

PROS AND CONS OF EMPLOYABILITY

In trying to blend the functions of schooling and higher education the government plays a vital role. In schools, students must be taught to enjoy learning with competitiveness. If a student locks himself up and expunges himself out of activities that are new to him, it becomes a teacher's duty to break this lock and unlock the skill inside a student. The unseen magnetic force of the teacher should per se make the class environment a good place to learn and communicate. When one is ready to communicate, ostensibly the psychological barrier of aloofness is burnt in thin air. Also, if the practical aspects of the subject are not taught to apply, where else will the student find see the process happening. Again, a teacher would fail in her duty if the students don't begin to comprehend the difference between the logic of the known and the mysteries of unknown. Eventually, this knowledge gained during the schooling years such as how to communicate your thoughts, how to apply the theory in practice, would alone thrust up the students confidence and potential during the higher education. And when a good schooling intermingles with those four or five years of higher education, the student would be ready to take up any test that the job market throws at him, thus making the candidate employable.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Schools and pre-Schools play an integral role in modifying a students life. Delhi born Harvard Professor Raj Chetty who had recently won the John Bates Clark medal often called the “baby Nobel Prize” says that India should focus more on elementary education to improve the earning power of its citizens. According to his research, being in good KG classroom is the first step to success during adulthood. He reckons that those who were lucky enough to have better teachers in childhood are certainly the ones who attend college, have higher earnings and live in a better neighborhood. A good teacher is the one who innovates and helps a student to ease through the difficulties in a subject and capturing the interest of the student. Thus, School shapes the essential half of the child that in turn carves out an ideal future.

In order for students to be industry- ready, the institutions need to train the graduates in a particular skill set, be it technical skills or people skills. As the CMD of Biocon rightly puts it “The Skill gap denies most graduates employment in India”. An astounding statistics shows that on an average 300-500 hopefuls apply for a new biotechnology-related job vacancy but most of them get rejected as they are not industry-ready. To add to the misery, the ones who are fortunate to get in do not possess the important laboratory skills or might possess good academic knowledge but very little perspective on real-life business situations. Due to this, the companies need to invest a considerable amount of time, money and effort in training freshers.

Another important step towards making a youth employable was taken by the Delhi government along with the Singapore government. India's first world class Vocational Education and Skill development center was launched recently that trains a workforce of over 15,000 each year that creates job opportunities both in India and overseas. Over 22 corporate houses have come up to support the Centre. This step would be like a game-changer that would ensure that none of the pass-outs remain unemployed and training would be based on the market demand. If such steps are taken by all the state governments then the employability certainly would reach the pinnacle.

CONCLUSION

As the number of graduates passing out of universities is getting higher a proportionate amount of jobs have however, failed to keep pace. Beset by a flood of institutes (offering innumerable and varying degrees of education) and a shrinking market for their skills India's graduates are struggling to subsist in an extremely challenging market. The skills possessed by an individual are not just wasted but acts a liability if

it's not honed properly. Nevertheless, if schools start incorporating more pragmatic subjects that would inculcate reading habits, communication skills then the situation during graduation would be less toxic. Considering, the newer subjects that are put in are comparatively more application based, the method of learning should be given prime importance. A quality based teaching and a perfect environment for learning are some of the essential components for improving an individual's ability during a job interview. Although, the enormous demand for higher education has increased in our country, the outcome after graduation can be grudgingly puzzling. The puzzle can only be solved with a focus more on the very nature of schooling. A few months back a preposterous decision made by the government to promote all students automatically to Standard VIII will not only denigrate the quality of education but also accelerate the rot. Incompetent students will flock to job markets looking for suitable job opportunities for "Standard VIII pass" candidates, when in reality their educational competence might be closer to Standard III. Hence, a complete, planned and an erudite approach towards chiseling a good quality school education is the first step towards an employable graduate.

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