

Towards an Educated India: Developing Socially Responsible Corporate Citizens in Business School

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and corporate citizenship with CSR as the binding philosophy are becoming increasingly acceptable in the business parlance today. The definition of corporate citizenship in this context includes two important concepts. First, it recognizes that a business organization has an impact on the immediate environment and society at large and that it also affects other parties. This leads us to the broader concept of stakeholders beyond the usual shareholders. Second, it recognizes that a business entity has cultural, social and environmental responsibilities to the society at large.

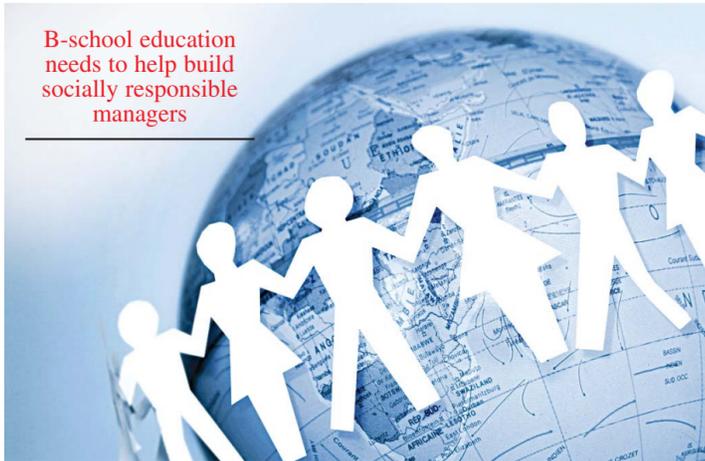
In the above context the role of business schools and other institutions of higher education becomes crucial as the students passing out there from are expected to assume important responsibilities in the corporate world. Therefore, a basic level of awareness and sensitivity about the concepts and premise of corporate citizenship and resultant corporate social responsibility is absolutely essential to be included in the curricula of such institutions.

The four main areas, which must represent this domain in Business-schools, are:

1. Responsibility of Business in Society

Business and society recognize business as an important institution in society. Both should be addressed from an economic, legal, ethical and

B-school education needs to help build socially responsible managers



philanthropic perspective, according to Archie Carroll's Pyramid of Social Responsibility.

At the lowest levels of the pyramid, businesses have a responsibility to be economic

HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

cally viable so that they can provide a return on investment for their owners, create jobs for the community, and contribute goods and services to the economy.

At the next level, companies are required to obey laws and regulations that specify responsible business conduct.

Ethical responsibilities addressed by the organizations are the next level of the pyramid. Business ethics refers to the principles and standards that guide professional behavior

in the world of business.

And finally, at the top of the pyramid are the philanthropic responsibilities, which promote human welfare and goodwill. Voluntary contributions by way of money, time

responsibility and risk in achieving organizational objectives.

3. Ethical Decision Making
Ethical decision making involves both a descriptive understanding of how decisions are made as well as frameworks for understanding the intellectual decision making process. It is important for students to learn that organizational ethical decision-making is very different from personal, individual ethical decisions. There is, however, a very strong sense of inter-dependence between the concepts of personal and professional probity.

4. Corporate Governance
Corporate governance is a formal system of accountability and control for organizational decisions and resources. The philosophy that

an organization holds regarding accountability and control directly affects how corporate governance works.

Some of major parameters to consider in corporate governance discussions include guidelines for organizations, shareholder rights, executive compensation, mergers and acquisitions, composition and structures of Board of Directors, auditing and control, risk management, CEO selection procedure and executive succession plans, among others.

Developing corporate citizens on the lines of CSR means sustaining economic / business activities by mingling social responsibility of the enterprise in their external and internal relations with business prospects. Hence, CSR is more than charity. It has some underlying economic implication. It is an innovative way by which the firms contribute, spend in

towns and villages and buy products from millions of artisans who are at the bottom of the pyramid.

Efforts are thus required to integrate CSR into the mainstream of business education, where Deans and Professors at business schools and universities can promote new teaching models. Some business schools have started making efforts to produce more socially - sensitized MBAs, but the enthusiasm is still lacking. Business schools can foster an ongoing dialogue and partnership between business leaders, business schools and NGOs. Efforts like advocating philanthropic activities should be encouraged in campuses where students can participate in societal development activities e.g. working for slum rehabilitation programs, hosting relief camps, earthquake rehabilitation programs, literacy develop-

ment programs, etc. There is a need to develop a strong collaboration between the Institutes as well. The need exists to persuade business schools and individual researchers such as PhD and MBA students to work on CSR. And finally, the students should be motivated to take up alternative career by through jobs

with NGOs, at least for some part of their initial career. This would truly enable them to develop into socially responsible corporate citizens.

(This article has been authored by Prof Nishi Kaul, Academic Coordinator & Associate Professor, Times Business School, Vashi and a life member of HEF.)

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"Sustainability and employability are very important"

How do you see the growth and evolution of the Indian education system, over the last few years? Where is it lagging behind?

Indians have always kept learning and discovering new things from centuries. Today the growth of the Indian economy and sustainability is forcing the Indian government to accelerate the process of developing all the branches of Indian education system. In the recent past the focus has shifted from public to private sector providers of higher education, but there is a significant increase in private colleges offering management courses and this has led to the confusion amongst the student about the right institute. In the present context there is a wide gap existing between the real life management practices in business organizations and the type of management education imparted in the respective B-School. The gap is widened further when compared to global standards, in terms of people being able to think independently and taking up entrepreneurship. In the competitive scenario the corporates are looking for the leader who can solve the problem and create a differentiation. Differentiator is Entrepreneurship Leadership. Leaders don't create followers they create more leaders.

What elements should the present-day education system incorporate in the curriculum as well as teaching methodology to be able to produce more socially responsible citizens?

The present day education system should introduce an innovative teaching program as well as update the curriculum and syllabi periodically in consultation with the industry experts about the practices being adopted at the market place. These should be facilitated through the workshops on curriculum design incorporating inputs, as need-assessment methodologies. We ensure that our students at IFEEL are engaged in the practical education and project work from the first year itself. Such activities build more confidence in the minds of the students as they grasp the need of the student and thereby help fine-tune as per the industry expectation.

What is the role and relevance of the private sector in the field of education?

Dr. H.S.Cheema, Director - IFEEL (Global Education Trust's, Institute for Future Education, Entrepreneurship & Leadership, located in Lonavala) shares his views on education, how students should choose B-schools and what B-schools should offer to the students in an interview with B. Manisha. Excerpts



The private sector has shown growing interest over the last decade in education. Associations of business leaders and corporate foundations have emerged that are bringing innovative modes of learning, new resources and approaches to the education sector. The basic role of the education institute in the private sector is to encourage out-of-box learning for the students, educate, train and develop the young generation for the successful leadership role. The basic purpose of the learning programs should not be to transmit the knowledge from the book, but to impart training and learning to effect changes in (ASK) i.e. Attitude, Knowledge and Skills.

In your view, what should be the focus of the management-education?

Management education should focus on the quality of faculty having corporate and academic exposure preferably meeting one of the criteria i.e. either with strong research base, or consultancy experience or managerial techniques in the industry, secondly there should be focus on the infrastructure which includes good library with rich collection of management books, journals and periodicals, computer and peripherals, and classroom fitted with multimedia and projections facilities. Above all the management education should re-invent themselves with changing times and redesign updating curriculum for facing the challenges in the global village.

How can students choose the right management program for their career?

Not everything that has MBA on the box also contains MBA inside the box. Students need to consider a) methodology employed by an institute which makes a huge difference

to the development of right mix of (ASK)...Attitude, Skills and Knowledge b) campus tour, (you see and feel yourself), c) Infrastructure, d) Intellectual capital, e) students selection policy, f) Accreditation of the institution.

IN CONVERSATION

Student must also carefully evaluate his/her career graph before enrolling for a management program.

How can good placements happen for the students?

Let's understand one thing - It's not the first job that is important, but the sustainability and the employability is more important. In order for good placements the institute should identify the industry expectations of the skill sets required for the students, TQM in management and the changes required in the faculty imparting management education. How we prepare ourselves to lead change today will decide on the placement of students.

Can you share some information about the IFEEL as an institute and the courses being offered? What are the pedagogical methods being deployed to impart learning?

India is going through very interesting and challenging times both economically and socially. We at IFEEL Institute for Future Education Entrepreneurship and Leadership believe that the entrepreneurship and leadership are critical to India's prosperity, economic development and social equality across all level of society. The institute fosters and nurtures leaders capable of making a difference in the management and the corporate. As Gandhiji had once quoted, "Be the change you want to see in the world". Education, entrepre-

neurship and leadership are the most powerful tool to change the world. How we prepare ourselves to lead change today will decide the effectiveness of our governance framework in the future.

The vision of IFEEL is to develop and nurture leadership and entrepreneurship excellence. Entrepreneurial leadership is becoming a global necessity, hence it is more important to understand the elements that comprise this concept. Rightly IFEEL has focused on designing practice oriented PGDM programme, learning and a contemporary industry-focused curriculum driven by a strong corporate interface, which brings about an overall transformation in students. At IFEEL Entrepreneurship and Leadership are passions. We promote entrepreneurship in the region through active participation of faculty and students. Regular students and faculty interaction with the giants from the corporate world is helping us in grooming our students into leaders and not just the managers of yesteryears. Our faculty who are entrepreneurs and industry leaders themselves share their experience and knowledge with the student in a practical action-learning environment, designed to stimulate insight and understanding of the current practices of the market place.

IFEEL also makes an attempt to conduct collaborative research in global, cross-cultural areas of management, jointly with the leading research driven institutes worldwide. The institute visualizes itself as a training ground in business management for students to transform them into corporate leaders and entrepreneurs. We also conduct corporate training programs on regular basis for clients like Bayer India / Crompton Greaves / Shubhada Polymer etc.

Our philosophy of imparting education centers on the creation of a true learning environment. To achieve this the institute encourages the use of a wide range of pedagogical methods and strongly emphasizes experimentation for further innovation. Case analysis, role-play, and participant presentation, use of computer software, simulation and games, outbound exposure to judge leadership qualities, lecture-cum-discussions are among the teaching methods commonly used. Individual and team learning are equally emphasized, field work, group discussion and live industry projects.

What according to you is important and required to inculcate entrepreneurship in our country? What are some of the essential qualities of entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship requires an application of passion towards the creation and implementation of new and innovative ideas and the application of energy - as rightly quoted by Albert Einstein "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious".

The qualities of Entrepreneurship should be the willingness to take calculated risk-in-terms of time, career, equity, accepting challenges, creativity, decision making, vision to recognize the opportunity at the right time and marshal the needed resources to achieve the goal set.

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