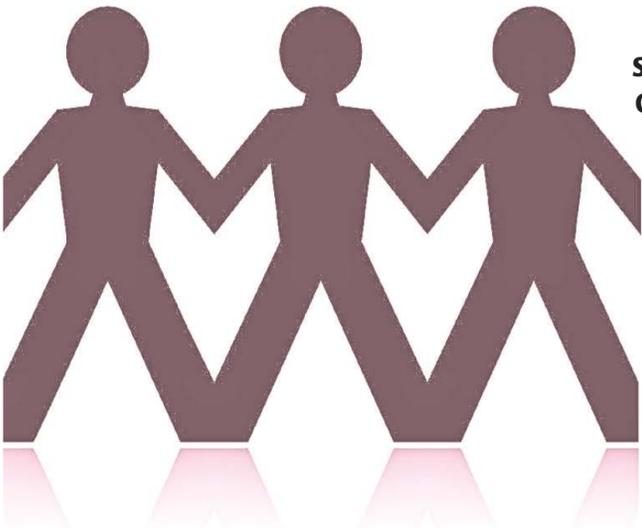


TOWARDS AN EDUCATED INDIA: Collaborative Higher Education



The Higher Education system needs to have a collaborative approach to succeed



THE subject of education deals with man's inclusive progress. This has a direct meaning of making the man a 'fine man'. But, in the wake of commercializing education as business we tend to treat students as customers. The NY Times recently ran an article discussing whether M.B.A. students are scholars in the traditional sense or are they behaving as customers buying a service - the professional PG degree. World over sensitive academicians and industrialists have been conducting forums and apex bodies for discussing the issue of credibility of higher education. In India, Higher Education Forum (HEF), a non-profit group of individuals and organizations representing various stakeholders related to higher education is doing a credible job.

The vendor and buyer system in higher education has lost the essence of academic value. The entire commercialization process has made higher education institutions concentrating less on academic orientation. We have gradually forgotten that students are investing their time and money with a purpose in mind; the purpose is gaining knowledge and awareness of business processes. In India the primary problem lies in the very insight of

higher education; majority students who go in for a PG in management education looks at an MBA degree as a passport to bag an 'ideal job'. On the other hand, there is a growing pressure from industry to make their fresh inductees productive from day one to reduce the subsequent training costs. Organizations today are looking for trained profes-

EXPERT SPEAK: HIGHER EDUCATION FORUM

sionals and students competent of taking decisions from start.

The common interface model between academia and industry is that of producer-consumer. For a long time this relationship has lasted between both. This relationship calls for some partnership as the consumer i.e. the industry has to ensure that the output of the producer - the educational institution satisfies the needs largely. One way to improve the interface between both is through a form of collaboration, which is more in the nature of a feedback loop; it is for the industry to provide inputs back to the academic institutions regarding their perception or evaluation of their products. This kind of

interaction requires a safe platform. May be further, the industry needs to pitch in with some special insights in the curriculum, certain dimensions suitable to the present scenario and practices by designing some joint programs. This means customizing the programs to some extent.

New ideas and innovation is the need of the hour. The world is waiting for new products and development. Today every organization is driven by the intellectual property. Why not have collaborative research between industry and academia? A good research can enhance the ability of a company to adjust to changes and the learning for gripping changes in technology. Research also helps the company build a leadership position in leveraging the new technology for offering higher value. Research can help service the constant demand for upgrading quality, lowering costs, and creating more value. And can also help develop new approaches for solving problems, as engineers and managers may not be able to do this. One practical way to bridge this gap is to have industry to invite academicians who may have an interest in some specific areas useful to the industry also. The academician can spend their time and energy and

industry may facilitate the academicians with facilities. I am sure, though research is said to be impracticable, a little time and effort with patience will be very lucrative.

The academia industry interface can also solve the issue of ethics losing its credence from the syllabus coverage and practice. Some time back a relevant article on the Forbes website examined the reasons for the digression of American B schools. B schools largely focus on results rather than the process to attain them. Students should be made aware that morality is not an issue only when problems arise. Individual responsibility and social welfare is part of the institutional backdrop. Let us not forget that we are responsible for our future. We have to create today's and tomorrow's leaders who would respond ethically even under intense pressure and are able to respond to societal issues resulting from changing trends in demographics, environmental changes like global warming, commotion in national, world economies. The industry academia interface can certainly review the point of ethical practices more stringently by working together on some ethical decision making models. These models must have in common the process of defining the issues, making decisions by reviewing alternatives based on intuitive evaluation or on ethical rules and principles, deciding whether to carry out the action, and then implementing it using the best deliberative judgment.

Finally, after 60 years of independence, we have failed to provide work-oriented education to our youth. The reality is it that while we are apprehensive of our GDP growth we must realize our shortfalls in creating versatile and sensible managers and entrepreneurs. Making educational policies that

could tie up the relationship between education and job opportunities is the need of the hour.

(This article has been authored by Dr. Vidya Hat-tangadi, Professor of Marketing Management and Director of Anjuman-I-Islam's Allana Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai. She may be contacted at vidhya_28@yahoo.com)

BMS - MUCH IN DEMAND

BY AMI GANDHI

The Bachelor in Management Studies (BMS) has become a very coveted and aspired-for course

WITH the increasing demand for professionally trained management executives in the contemporary market, the Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS) has been increasing in its popularity. It is the undergraduate MBA, planned to train students for middle management positions in various fields such as marketing, finance, human resource and others.

BMS, a 3-year full time degree program with six semesters was launched by the University of Mumbai from the academic year 1999-2000 and has been offered ever since by several institutes. This course prepares student to grab opportunities in the management profession at both, national and international level. "BMS helps in the development of undergraduate students into managers and leaders who will be able to take the rigors and challenges of the global market-place. Management studies have been planned pertaining to the students and as per their demand. Students are given a deep insight into the global work-place," says Prof. Nikunj Doshi, an academician and a BMS faculty of Narsee Monjee (NM) College.

The program has been designed so that the students

can create their path of self-employment, which would also benefit the industry and the corporates, by providing them with trained and certified personnel. Agrees Meghna Tuli, former-BMS coordinator at L S Raheja College, "The main objective of this course is to lay down the foundation of management disciplines. The kind of delivery given to the students makes them 'industry ready' and savvy enough to market themselves." This degree gives the basic knowledge about management education and provides training in the use of modern technology.

The Comparison

The career options available to a B.Com graduate are CA/ICWA/CS/MBA and for a B.Sc student are medical, engineering or research in the field of sciences and technologies, etc. The alternatives for B.A student are economics, philosophy, geography, political science, literature, sociology, etc. If a student is not interested in any of these fields then s/he should opt for BMS because it includes management as a career. Unlike the common streams, a BMS student gains a theoretical as well as practical knowledge through teaching pedagogy of case studies presentations, internships, interactions and discussions, visual aids etc. "There is a vast difference in the orientation of BMS and other streams. Lack of practical approach and limited scope for growth and opportunities are the major drawbacks faced by B.Com/B.Sc/B.A graduates. An important thing to note here is BMS offers more to students in terms of moral values and ethics. It helps in developing the overall personality of a student," says Dr. Richa Jain, the BMS coordinator at Thakur College of Science and Commerce.

The Content

The course and its semesters and modules have been revised as per the requirement from the industry. "The effectiveness of the course depends on the capability of the college to implement the program. The USP of the course lies in the pedagogy. Hence, I would recommend all the aspirants to join the top ranking colleges, as they would have a better course execution facilities," adds Meghna Tuli. Some of the important subjects included in the syllabus are:

- ▶ Business law
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Production management
- ▶ Management
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Operations Management
- ▶ Organisational Behaviour

Job Opportunities

Theoretically speaking, a BMS graduate is on par and receives a top-notch job as compared to graduates from BA / B.Sc / B.Com. The students could get opportunities to work in a private and a corporate sector in export-import departments, governmental organizations, and in commercial banks and financial institutions, multinational companies in India and abroad. An individual can also opt for career in human resource management, sales and marketing, research and development etc.

All is not so rosy though, for while the course was envisaged as a fully employable and job-ready course, the actual picture is different. Most BMS graduates still prefer to do a Postgraduate course before they jump on the job-market. The reasons are manifold - most of them are very young and not adequately ready to take the pressures of the corporate-world, as well as the degree itself is seen as producing

students who are better than plain commerce or arts graduates - but not fully employable when matched against the MBA graduates. However, the course is still one of the most popular and keenly coveted ones and more and more colleges are including it as an offering.

Majority of the subjects included in the syllabus form the upper hand for a student who opts for MBA in future. S/he has a definite edge over other normal degrees, as BMS covers all the vital aspects of MBA program. This benefit doesn't mean that a BMS student is relaxed because it offers no advantage in terms of selection proce-

ture for MBA nor do institutes have any reservations for BMS students.

It is a fact that the BMS program helps in skill enhancement rather than knowledge enhancement, which adds a great deal of value to a student when s/he is ready to step out in the industry.

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