

Towards an Educated India: Employability and Higher Education



Creating an employable work-force, through suitable interventions, is critical for India's progress

AZIM PREMJI, Chairman of Wipro once said, "The challenge before the industry (in India) does not lay in the supply of talent but rather that of employability". It has often been observed that while India produces a large number of graduates from professional courses like engineering & management, a very small percentage of them are actually employable. A good percentage of engineers and management graduates either do not get a job or are forced to take up a job that is not related to their qualification. While enough has been said over last few years about this malaise, not much seems to have been done to correct the problem.

crucial to explore ways and means of improving the employability. Since more than half of India's population is in the age group of 19 to 25 years, improving employability is core to India's dream of becoming an economic superpower.

Broadly, the potentially employable workforce can be classified in three categories:

Category-1:

Employable- A very small percentage by virtue of their talent, qualifications, soft skills, attitude, personality, etc. They can find employment of their own.

Category-2:

Not so employable- This is the category that needs to be paid maximum attention to. These are those resources that are not

directly employable for several reasons varying from poor academics to poor access to the job market. However, with planned and focused training interventions & grooming, they may move to the "employable" category. To start with, we need to put in concrete efforts for this section.

Category-3:

Not Employable- In this set, the available resources are primarily not employable for multiple reasons. It could be due to illiteracy, poor or incomplete education, total lack of skills & attitude, background deficiencies, poverty, etc.

Some of the ways that could be adopted to upgrade category 2 (not so employable) to category 1 (employable) are as follows:

1 Early identification & intervention: Identifying the category 2 category early, preferably while pursuing a professional course (like engineering or management) could prove to be of great help. The institutes offering professional courses could, in collaboration with the industry, develop methods of evaluating the students on various key parameters and attributes (attitude, technical skills & aptitude, communication, clarity, etc) right in the first (for management courses) or second (for engineering courses) year of their course and then devise suitable interventions.

2 Career options: Students in their first and second year of professional courses should be exposed to various

career options available to them. This step should be linked to the above step (early identification) so that necessary skills could be imparted. Institutes must make career options as a part of their induction program and subsequent (continuous) counseling.

3 Entrepreneurship as a career option: Entrepreneurship must be aggressively projected as a career option for those having aptitude for the same (as detected through the

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first step). Apart from having entrepreneurship as a subject, the Institutes must necessarily have incubation centres and provide assistance for specific period to budding entrepreneurs.

4 Non-traditional avenues: It is important to explore non traditional avenues like sports / media / personal wealth management, etc. and identified students should be provided necessary inputs.

5 Traditional Practices, Arts and trades: Most of the traditional practices and trades in India are still largely unorganized and in most cases hidden. These practices could be recognized, upgraded, standardized, and offered in organized manner. For instance, trades like carpentry, leather works, pottery, etc have a huge scope.

6 Advantage outsourcing: The world has adopted

outsourcing as a viable option. Multiple jobs could be created in outsourcing as the field could encompass even daily chores. Though this has started gaining momentum, it is still largely unorganized and insignificant. There is substantial scope of becoming entrepreneurs in this area.

7 The "Educated India" mission: There is a need for thousands of educators and teachers to carry out literacy pro-

grams in India and provide basic education. Those with an aptitude for teaching could be specifically trained as "Teachers / Educators".

8 Spirituality management as an option: With the focus shifting to India and spirituality quotient, it is not a bad idea to have professionals managing these aspects. Institutes may start looking at offering courses in "Vedic Management" or "Spiritual Management", etc.

While above steps may address the issue of Category 2, we need to put in extra efforts for Category 3 (not employable). The first step obviously is to make them literate by providing them the basic

education. That by itself is a challenge considering the geographical and cultural diversity of India.

(This article has been authored by Prof Parag Amin, one of the founding members of HEF and an Associate Professor with SIES College of Management Studies, Navi Mumbai. He may be contacted at parag20@gmail.com.)

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GROOMING TALES

Perfect grooming is a pre-requisite for succeeding in corporate life

BY AMI GANDHI

Clothes and manners do not make the man; but when he is made, they greatly improve his appearance.

The most important fact is that an individual's appearance influences the opinions of everyone around. The way s/he looks and acts determines the thinking of other people. According to psychologist Albert Mehrabian, 55% of a first impression is based on appearance that includes dressing, grooming, body language, etc. 38% is on the way one sounds, the tone and pitch, voice and accent and just 7% on what an individual have to say.

Facts

Grooming means dressing well, to be presentable to others. S/he must give a little more attention to the dressing style at work because what one wears may considerably influence their career path. "Grooming is the total package of our personality that we present to the world. It includes our appear-

ance, behaviour, attitude, confidence, communication skills, etiquette, corporate culture, interpersonal skills, people skills, emotional quotient, etc," says Aruna Mookhey, coach and mentor at Rivet Consulting. It's all about dressing in a way that projects an image of the sophisticated, successful working person; one is or will like to be. In simpler terms, grooming is making oneself look neat and attractive.

Myths

In a performance driven society, success in any profession depends on the proficiency of certain skills. How people present themselves with proper communicating skills, speaks volumes about their credibility. "There are many who think that grooming is only about looking handsome or beautiful. Good looks are one facet that can make one climb the success ladder. But, to be successful, one also needs to practice time-management. One must combine these with other skills in public speaking, presenta-

TIPS

replace the importance of true talent, hard work, innate ability and ambition, putting the best-foot professionally at workplace can give a competitive advantage.

Importance

Professionalism, level of sophistication, intelligence and credibility are the perceptions solely made by seeing an individual's appearance. Grooming is extremely important so that one can present a pleasing and confident personality. Grooming helps an individual to deal with people and face challenging situations. A well groomed individual stands out in a crowd and is always willing to learn and imbibe qualities that

will make him special and efficient. "Grooming is very important for a fresher as he is transitioning from a protected environment of campus life to the corporate world which requires the person to be responsible, accountable, confident, and capable of being a leader or a co-operative team member. All this needs Emotional stability and a high self worth," adds Mookhey.

Grooming is not just important for select few who have to deal with clients and customers on daily basis but it is as important to the individuals belonging to various fields. To survive in this competitive world, companies wish to hire a worker or an employee who works smarter and looks presentable. "As much as we would like to say "do not judge the book by its cover", we still do. Any and every-where we go people would like to judge, and if you are a well groomed person you do create that ever-lasting impact," says Ganapathy.

A groomed individual can:
• Confidently meet people and handle difficult situations in the work environment

- Present him/her self in a more polished and poised way.
- Communicate in a dignified and cultured way.
- Work with integrity and ethics
- Face challenging situation deftly.

Science of Grooming includes:

- Skills
 - ▶ Body language
 - ▶ Communication
- Personal and social values related to appearance
- The relationship between appearance and first impressions
- Increase in confidence level
- Planning the proper attire for an interview
- Clothing choices
- Good grooming habits to improve appearance and self-esteem like -
 - ▶ Hair neatly tied up
 - ▶ No bad breath
 - ▶ Clean and washed socks and polished shoes
 - ▶ Well manicured hands
 - ▶ Usage of mild deodorant
- Dressing for positive job performance.

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