

EDUCATION AS A PEDESTAL FOR EMPLOYABILITY IN URBAN TELANGANA

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Abstract: Unemployment is often expressed as an economic condition in which active individuals seeking jobs remain un-hired. Unemployment is today a global phenomenon differing in degree and types. India faces structural unemployment with the predominance of educated and industrial labor unemployment. The validity of the present day education system itself becomes questionable with educated unemployment and industrial labor unemployment rampant in the urban areas. The quality of the job seekers often becomes a hindrance to the employers. This has resulted in a mismatch between the job seekers and their employability. Unemployment and employability are indeed very serious challenges faced by the country. This problem necessitates immediate corrective action by all the stakeholders.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the challenges of the present day education system and the gaps in relation to employability. It seeks to get an insight into the requirement of the industry for recruitment and reforms in the education system required thereof for better employment and employability.

Key Words: Educational Reforms, Employability, Industry Requirement, Stake holders.

Introduction: Unemployment is often expressed as an economic condition in which active individuals seeking jobs remain un-hired. Srinivasan (2008) regards unemployment in India as a perennial problem in spite of persistent policies and programmes to resolve it. India faces structural unemployment which is categorized into rural and urban unemployment. Rural unemployment can be differentiated between seasonal and disguised unemployment. Urban unemployment is categorized into educated and industrial labor unemployment. Unemployment is today a global phenomenon differing in degree and types.

Unemployment apart the concept of employability is gaining impetus in the labour market. Employability implies a person's potential to gain employment, retain it and move to new employment by choice. Weinert (2001) States that knowledge, skills and attitudes possessed by the individual are vital for employability. These qualities can be imbibed through right kind of education. Sharma, (2007) regards education a catalyst for all development process. It can be a great force in bringing about the desirable social changes and human development. The vicious circle of unsatisfactory education system, employability apprehensions and unemployment needs to be broken.

Review of literature: The Dearing Report into Higher Education (1997) emphasised the importance of education for employability. That the focus should be on the development of key skills and gaining work experience. De la Harpe (2000) suggests that there is concern worldwide that existing undergraduate programmes are not producing graduates with the kind of life- long learning skills and professional skills which they need in order to be successful in their careers. Hilliard Pollard (1998) states that employability is about having the capability to gain initial employment, maintain employment and obtain

new employment if required. Coopers and Lybrand state employability skills in terms of intellectual skills, key skills, personal attributes and knowledge. Harvey (2001) is of the opinion that the employers have a very important role to play in converting the graduates into graduate with employability skills. Holmes (2001) states that employees do not want to recruit graduates with skills per se, rather that they require competency and effectiveness.

Need and importance of the study: The practical implication of this study is to analyze the challenges of the present day education system and the gaps in relation to employability. It would also reveal the expectations of the industry and the short comings. It would suggest how best these short comings could be overcome. In short it is a strive for a framework which can deliver industry savvy youth. This study will add value by enriching the institutions with reforms for improvising the education system. This in turn would help in imparting skill and industry readiness for employability. It will offer a beneficial source of information to the institutions for equipping the students with knowledge, understanding and skill.

There is the problem of matching the type of skills employers want, or expect young people to have, to how best young people can be trained to do those jobs. In this direction the research will adopt three main scenarios analysis and objectives

Objectives: To explain a SWOT Analysis of the present education system in India

- To analyze the requirement of the industry for employability
- To suggest policy measures for filling the gap between education and employability

Methodology: The research methodology required collection of primary data from professionals of the industry, academicians, and students. It is also the

outcome of secondary data since it already has a pre-established degree of validity and reliability.

Limitations: The limitation of this study would be the accuracy of the information reported by selected individuals and organizations. The research is based on the conditions prevailing in the urban area of Hyderabad in the state of Telangana relevant to 2015-16.

Education, Employability and Unemployment: Education is the foundation stone of a civilization. It is the mark of a prosperous nation. Education transforms a person into a complete person and a society into an intellectual society. Imparting right knowledge and skills to the youth ensures building a strong nation. The quality of the educational infrastructure has undergone a sea change. The educational institutions have a state of art infrastructure. Six percent of the GDP is earmarked for education. In spite of all these achievements the validity of the present day education system itself becomes questionable with educated unemployment and industrial labor unemployment rampant in the urban areas.

The graduate schools are churning out graduates in huge numbers every year who are on the quest for employment. The quality of the job seekers often becomes a hindrance to the employers. This has resulted in incompatibility between the job seekers and their employability. Tilak (2015) defined employability as the possession of a set abilities required for developing skill, updating technical knowhow and developing positive skill. Employability has thus become a serious concern to be tackled.

Unemployment, where in, willing and able bodied persons do not find a source of livelihood, has umpteen causative factors. Rapid growth in the population is identified as the major contributory factor towards it. Urban oriented industrialization generates employment in the urban areas relegating the rural areas to the background. Slow industrial and economic growth has further aggravated the problem. The social and economic scenario in India has also contributed towards unemployment and has adversely affected the employability. The economic growth in the post reform period was sluggish. However the macroeconomic parameters gradually started showing an upward trend. The growth rates in national income, per-capita income and capital formation were encouraging. There was a shift in the contribution towards the national income from agriculture to the service sector which recorded an incredible and remarkable growth rate. Foreign Direct Investment was one of the highest in the world. Liberalization and international trade opened up the economy to the world. Privatization and globalization furthered the development.

Nonetheless the growth has been jobless. This eventually brings us back to the problems of mismatch in education and employment.

Unemployment and employability are indeed very serious challenges faced by the country. This gap can be bridged through appropriate education. This necessitates immediate corrective action by all the stakeholders. Reduction of this huge mismatch is the need of the hour. In order to understand the educational framework a SWOT Analysis of the present day education system in the country becomes essential.

SWOT Analysis of Education:

Strengths: The education system has undergone a transformation with the inset of massive technology. It boasts of an incredible infrastructure. The entry of private capital has brought in an element of commercialism. This has enhanced efficiency and personalized education. All these changes have played a prominent role in redefining the purpose of the education itself.

Weakness: The methodology in imparting education has remained static. The techniques are outdated. The emphasis is on wrote education. Theoretical knowledge gains over the practicality and applicability of the knowledge acquired. Scant emphasis is laid on understanding the concepts as prominence is given to short term cramming of useless facts. Orthodox mentality prevails in the society in general.

Opportunities: Skill based education is all pervading. Slowly and steadily original thinking, creativity, research and innovation is finding place in the system. The teaching community is gradually rising to meet the expectations. Faculty improvement programmes are finding their way into the system and have come to stay. These provide ample opportunities to raise the bar higher.

Threats: Mediocrity in the teachers and students still prevails in the system which is a major threat. Regulations and controls instead of improving the system often end in hampering it.

Industry's perception towards employability skills: The industry looks for achievement beyond the subject discipline. Depending on the job profile the industry considers various factors before an appointment. The IT Sector in general looks into qualities like ability to work in a team structure and leadership qualities. Proficiency with computer software programs is also taken into account. In fact every placement demands the candidate to be computer Savvy. In the public sector prime importance is given to the ability to plan, organize and prioritize work. The financial sector emphasizes on the aptitude to analyze quantitative data. At the managerial cadre wherein they are directly in contact with the customers prime focus is on qualities like

the attitude, talent to make decisions and solve problems. In core engineering and medical field appointments are purely based on the technical knowledge and experience related to the job. In the field of journalism it is the ability to create and edit written reports with a flair for adventure and risk, occasionally. Areas like interiors, fashion designing and advertising demand originality and creativity. Commercial understanding is a quality which weighs high in the business sector. The marketing sector primarily goes with the ability to influence others and sell the products. In general the industry looks for generic skills parallel to their academic skills. Deductive and inductive research methodology has been adopted since it would give a comprehensive and holistic approach to the study. Data was collected through face to face semi-structured interview, mobile phones and internet postings. Responses were gathered from 100 stakeholders. Another 30 of them did not respond to the survey. An

in-depth study necessitated the selection of stakeholders from the fields of education and industry. The study centered on educationists, industry professionals and the students who had the relevant information. Of all the responses received the educationists constituted 28 percent, the professionals 48 percent and the prospective employment seekers 24 percent. The criteria for employability were gathered from a preliminary survey. Majority of them voted for knowledge, communication skills and attitude as the criteria for employability. Computer aided data analyses were resorted to and the following assessment arrived at. Industry responses were collected from 48 professionals stretching from various sectors like software, IT, finance, food, health and manufacturing industry. The age group was hovering around 40 to 80 years. Some of them did not respond and few others with much delay and hence were not considered.

Table-I: Industry Responses

Industry Response	Parameters		
Order of Preference	Communication	Knowledge	Attitude
1	4	7	37
2	24	17	7
3	20	24	4

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that the order of preference for employability by the industry was attitude, followed by communication skill with knowledge/training at the lowest rung. The industrialists opined that attitude plays a prime role in dealing with the suppliers and customers. The marketing skills could be honed with the right attitude. Communicating in the local language becomes essential in certain industries and English language skill figured prominently in certain other

industries. The industrialists were of the opinion that knowledge could be imbibed effectively through training.

Responses were gathered from 28 academicians. Some enthusiastic faculty could not participate as they were busy with the academic schedule. The age group of the educationists selected ranged from 25 to 59 years as it would reflect experience and updated trends.

Table-II: Responses of Academicians

Responses of Academicians	Parameters		
Order of Preference	Communication	Knowledge	Attitude
1	9	7	12
2	12	9	7
3	7	12	9

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table that the academicians gave prominence to attitude for employability. Their verdict regarding the second slot was communication followed by knowledge. Majority of them felt that with the right kind of attitude, communication and knowledge will not be far behind.

The students selected were in the age group of 18 and 24 years. They represented various streams like Science, Commerce, Humanities, Mass Communication and Management. This selection was based on the idea that it would give an insight into the notions of the younger generation from various branches of education.

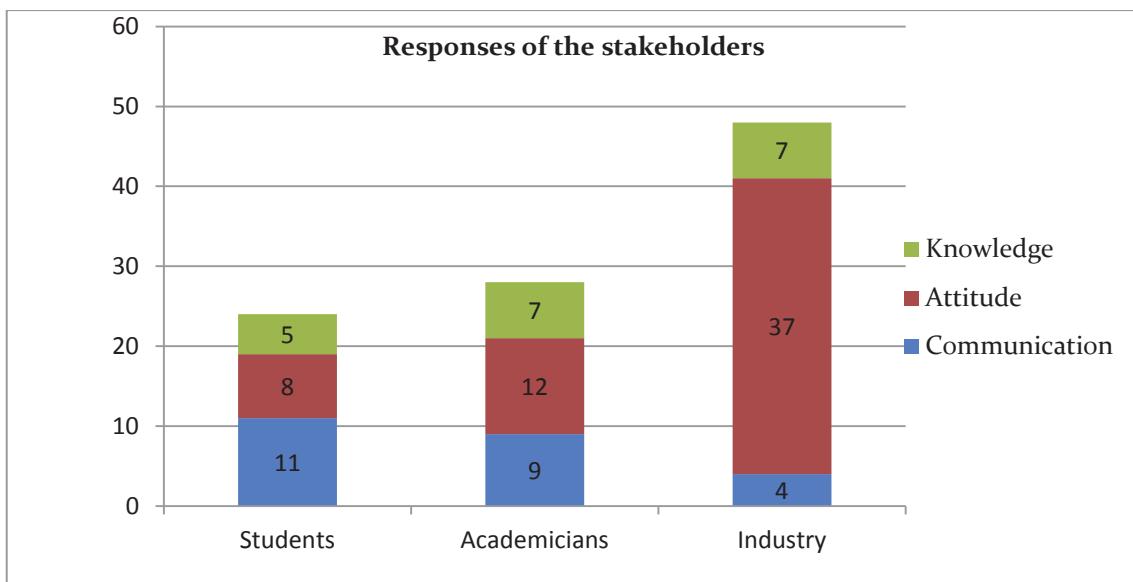
Table-III: Students' Responses

Students' Response	Parameters		
Order of Preference	Communication	Knowledge	Attitude
1	11	5	8
2	2	10	12
3	11	9	4

Source: Primary Data

From the above analysis of the student community it can be concluded that they regarded communication skills as the foremost requirement for employability. The out of the box thoughts would be meaningful

only when it is communicated effectively was the opinion of approximately half of the respondents. It was followed by attitude and knowledge/training.

Figure-I: Consolidated responses of the stake holders

The above diagram shows the response of the stakeholders. The three note-worthy parameters selected for analysis from 100 respondents were attitude, knowledge and communication skill. Attitude got the highest preference for employability in both the categories of academicians and the industry. Knowledge figured second followed by the communication skill in the opinion of industry. The academicians preferred communication over knowledge. The student community gave the highest priority to communication skills. Attitude figured next followed by the knowledge.

Findings:

- Attitude was regarded the most important parameter as per 77 percent of the industrialists.
- The criteria of attitude were given prime importance by 43 percent of the academicians.
- Communication skills were given prominence by 46 percent of the students.

Inferences: The survey revealed that everyone is expected to possess certain basic knowledge. Hence knowledge as a parameter took a backseat. It was felt that improvising knowledge could be attained with

the right kind of attitude. It is the generic skill of attitude which figured over the other parameters. Surprisingly both academicians and students gave least preference to knowledge over other parameters. This entails a serious thought regarding the present day education system.

The way ahead: Education will be complete and gratifying only when it is responsive to the labor needs. The general expectation of the employers from candidates is correct attitude and generic skills. The following suggestions which are study specific can be considered to bridge in the gap between education and employability

- Flexibility in the curriculum is the need of the hour. Selecting, organizing and sequencing curriculum should be done carefully and with a lot of forethought. Practical utility of the course should be considered exhaustively. The gap between the knowledge acquired and the skill required should be bridged. The challenges in this area are crucial as they have a direct impact on the essentials of the labor market. Defective education

system and defective man power planning will intensify the problem of employability further.

- Knowledge is invariably imparted in the course of education. It should however be integrated with critical thinking, problem solving ability and practicality of the knowledge so acquired.
- The study has revealed the fact that many youths from urban areas, have very unrealistic career aspirations. Many quit soon after joining due to work pressure and scant job satisfaction. The present day youth make little effort to adapt themselves to the expectations of the professional front. When they do not find the right kind of avocation they become dysfunctional socially and economically. They may ultimately drift into anti-social activities. Lack of dignity of labor for certain types of jobs also haunts the scenario. A change in the attitude of the students' needs to be considered. Integrating education with Psychology and Ethics could be the right solution. A course can be specially designed by a congregation of Psychologists and Academicians for a turnover in their attitude.
- The faculty plays a prominent role in delivering the reformations. Teaching should be chosen as a profession by choice and not by chance. It is often noticed that this profession is chosen for want of an alternative one. The faculty will be at its best when teaching comes from within. Learning is a lifelong process more so in the teaching field. Faculty development programmes should be incorporated on a regular basis. Patience, tolerance, adaptability and flexibility are the forte of a successful teacher. A compulsory course in psychology pedagogy will enable the faculty to develop the required skills and to reach out to the students effectively.
- Developing communication skills would be vital in instilling confidence. Students weak at

communication skills can be identified and a syllabus which caters to the needs of the work environment could be developed and advocated. It should be made mandatory for students of this category to be put in the specified number of hours to complete the course. The course would be effective only when it is integrated with practice rather than being purely theoretical. This is vital in making students more competitive in the market.

- Provision should be made for interaction between the industry and the educationists through conferences and seminars. Brain storming open house sessions should be encouraged. A think tank representing academicians, scholars, professors, industrialists and students can be constituted. The recommendations put forward by them intermittently, should be seriously considered for effective implementation.

Conclusion: The business, industry and higher education collaboration council, (2007) stated that the higher education and business sectors should be engaged in the development of a best practice framework for the development of employability skills of graduates. This is the key for bridging the gap between education and employment. Knowledge apart, attitude of the students should be honed. Communication skills also figure as an important factor which should be sharpened. The education system needs to adopt novel parameters which may emerge at a later date for sharpening the skills further.

Future Scope of the Study: This study has been limited to the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Future studies can be conducted at the state level. The size of the sample is small. A study which relates to a bigger sample and varied parameters for enhancing employability can be made.

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