

I³ = LET US TALK LESS AND PRACTICE IT MORE

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1.0 PRESENT SCENARIO - Institutional :

If we consider Institution as a manufacturing / processing unit, then the product (i.e. the student) gets processed from RAW to FINAL in three basic phases. The first is the Designing phase. This is attended to, by universities, eminent educationists and various academic bodies. Here the preparatory work is carried out with maximum contribution from the world of academics. Next phase is the Production / manufacturing phase, which takes place within the Institution itself. The student passes through series of theoretical and practical learning experiences and gets modified. This phase calls for active involvement of the industry, much more than the previous phase. The third and final phase is the Utilisation phase i.e., the industry where ultimately the students are put to test. Industry, which is the customer of the Institution, should have major say in this phase. Thus, Design at academic level, to final utilisation / real life level, via the institutional phase, is the product life cycle.

The major function of engineering colleges and polytechnics is to provide skilled, technically competent man-

power required by the industry. Is fresh engineer directly useful for industrial activities ? It is a common experience that fresh engineers with few months of on the job training prove their worth only after getting the "feel". Thus, Industry's investment during this period of training, comes into picture. We all appreciate the rapid technological changes in the world of work. But these are hardly reflected in the Designing phase. The technical education does not seem to respond rapidly to this changing environment. Ofcourse, this is possible through updating curricula, introducing new courses, modernisation of facilities and close interaction between institutes and industries. The best approach could be involving industry professionals in

- Board of studies / Executive councils / Senates as members
- Activities of updating syllabi, teaching / examination schemes.
- Evaluation activities as paper setters, examiners

The poor statistics, if someone tries to establish, will indicate how little professional talent (in numbers) is attracted, retained in above activities. What genuine efforts are made by academicians in this direction? Instead,

they quickly make "alternate" arrangement in place of "busy" industrial personnel who hardly involve in these activities with interest. No one pursues the real cause. Activities like visits, industry sponsored projects are taken lightly / casually and are carried out as rituals. For most of the teachers, I³ is limited to inviting industry professionals for lectures and / or as chief guests for some functions. FUNDS with institutions are always a constraint for I³. Expenses on exposure to industrial environment always fetch less priority. Student associations interact more as compared to their teachers. Although NPE-1986 describes multiple roles of technical teachers, today we have either totally fresh faculty (category A many a times "product" of the same institute) or senior professors (category B who enjoy VRS, after spending twenty calendar years in government colleges). Category A is so raw, that they hardly understand the importance of I³. On the other hand, Category B - let us stop talking. The scenario does not appear encouraging, and needs to be changed.

2.0 PRESENT SCENARIO - Industrial :

In general, industries are hardly interested in extending a hand of cooperation to the institutions. Many industries treat this as a Social obligation / Social tax. It is taken as an additional burden without any direct visible outcome for the industry. A number of institutions keep on approaching but very few ones get success. Visits are encouraged, but long term commitments, such as teachers' training, sandwich courses are avoided as far as possible or extended to those

who are "influential". Sandwich courses do not actively involve industrial sector in both, design/development of curriculum and course implementation. Equally, teachers also do not monitor the progress of their students during the industrial training part of the sandwich course by frequent visits. Ultimately, the transfer of knowledge falls on industry's shoulder and for them, where is the time ? how many students ? and to be attended by whom ? Involvement of the industry is very limited, merely concerned with end product. Generally two years are required for preparing a graduate, to become real productive. This path is difficult, time consuming and calls for large investments. Why Education Institutes were not set up by Tatas, Kisloskars and other eminent industrialists in 1983 ? Perhaps, they could have successfully produced the type of manpower they even needed. Instead, industries largely rely on all educational institutions for their inputs, prepare them over a period of training time and then put them to task. If institutes are "vendors / subcontractors / suppliers" it becomes indirect responsibility of industries to help them to supply the right type of product first time and every time. Industries go to door steps of institutes only for conducting campus interviews. Hence the interaction gets restricted on "papers" only. Forget about "Partnership" which is far ahead of Interaction.

3.0 PRESENT SCENARIO - The Student:

In the coming years, industry will evolve modern manufacturing processes as an outcome of technological

innovations. Is the student prepared for this? Can he bridge the gap between theory and practice? Is he taught the process of converting an idea into a business project? Is the relevance crystal clear? Perhaps not! The "application" concept is apparently missing everywhere.

Instead, the students keep on knocking doors of industries for projects, vocational training and final placement with standard printed letters from college authorities. Is this the job of students? Should they waste their time in such non productive business? Should the liason be through training and placement officer or other college authority or "Direct" between students and industries? Naturally industries cannot entertain thousands of students telephoning from the gates. Institutions as a central agency should not get eliminated in this fashion. They

should not enjoy this by-passing, at least when the students are studying. The vital link i.e. The Institution must remain on the scene as agency. In my opinion, students should not involve themselves in door to door selling activities. They are unaware of Industrial work culture, practices, systems and procedures. This input must be given to them primarily by colleges with active support from industry.

This is the scene today. This needs to be changed at all these levels immediately. Both, the industry and institution should be more serious about this issue and should focus / concentrate their efforts for the benefits of their product. As on today, although it is the nucleus, it is most unattended, ignored! And on the top of it, we talk of I³. It is high time to stop the talk immediately and practice it more.



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— Editor