

8. STATUS QUO OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Technical education, by and large, is so lucrative on one side while illusive on the other, potential on one side and passive on the other, crazy on one side and care-not on the other. Globalization has made everything open to everyone, which is a boon in many suffer the lack of quality. One such field in India, is technical education. As globalization is associated with privatization, obviously, education is a core field for private sector. To be practical it is true to say that the purpose of privatizing technical education has been fulfilled to a smaller extent for many technical institutions are being run for making money, that leads to declining standards. The present article deals with several facts and that have been greatly causing the downfall of standards.

HURDLES AND HARDSHIPS

The frontline discouraging factor in technical education is the low knowledge base of teaching community, which may be a result of recruiting graduate teacher in most of the engineering colleges. Under the present conditions of software employment, many engineering graduates enter the software profession soon after the completion of their graduation. However, a good number of students who are unable to enter the IT profession choose the teaching profession without any specific interest. This tendency or trend is not an appropriate gesture as far as the noble profession of teaching is

concerned. Generally, highly talented youth prefers software field for lucrative salaries, rapid and sharp rise in career. This factor grows exponentially at the cost of core fields. Ultimately, only disinterested graduate engineers and can't do persons enter the teaching profession and eventually spoil the morale.

The communicating ability of many engineering teachers is very much discouraging. Without language support, a teacher can not impress the students. Many college teachers opt mother tongue or the local language as medium of instruction, which may serve the purpose momentarily but in the long run it would be a disastrous effort as it limits the knowledge extension of the student community. Instead of imparting the essence of skills, these under communicative teachers kill the zeal of growing graduates. A teacher must have the sense of humor to the extent that it cultivates the presence of mind among the students. Professional course students should be equipped with technical skills and trouble shooting which can be derived from the art of presence of mind. The engineering teacher who concentrates mostly on application oriented science is expected to update his knowledge base and learn various skills related to teaching and motivation. The teacher first gets ignited by learning, thereby ignite the young pals through teaching. This process needs a commitment from the teachers' view point while it needs a positive approach from the students side.

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The importance of communication and soft skills has been greatly realized in the light of globalization and economic reforms. The face value of education in general and technical education in particular was lifted to a higher plane that it encompassed all the earlier, conventional beliefs. Every young student is expected to put across his or her own ideas across quite lucidly. This dark naked truth came in to lime light that runs the back into front line and the unconcerned in to most concerned. In the first instance every educated man has to sell himself before he sells his goods. He can sell himself only by exhibiting himself in a pleasant manner and smart gestures. This talent is obviously known as soft skill. Significance of soft skills has been given paramount concern these days for convincing the public of foreign origin is the biggest venture of any upcoming. Young graduate. Character development is a major task in soft skills training, which infact, is a natural ingredient of Indian culture and heritage. However, in the engineering curriculum only language skills are given paramount importance neglecting the rich heritage of literature and culture wherein the character building and values of human life are exemplified. Today, the educational system is so turbulent and instead of recognizing the significance of literature and culture, their essence is seated on the golden crown in the form of soft skills. Experts are being called for soft skills training, ignoring regular qualified language professors who can impart both morals and skills. Infact this is a task to be taken up by the managements.

However, the need of better communication and soft skills should not be honored at the cost of subject talent. Good communication with sound knowledge is the need of the hour as far as engineering graduates are concerned. All education need not end with mere employment, but self-employment needs to be given much care for there has been great potential unused in the country to make it more strong. In the course of development, scientific temperament should not be lost. Professional graduates are expected to cultivate the attitude of take-it-all-

at-notice. The short attention spans are to be extended further to meet the global requirements.

Technical education becomes more viable provided real-time curriculum is introduced and the same is to be updated to meet the industrial needs. Survival of technical education mostly depends on saleability of the ultimate product, that is the graduate engineer. Industrial requirements are required to be a part of either regular curriculum or a mandatory end-project which may essentially strengthen the real-time technical education. It is all but a strategic interaction between industry and institution, that both the sectors are to be realized. Importance of technical education has been growing that world industry runs after it. However, present day engineers are fancy of software placement and neglecting core industries. The core industry is now in a great crisis that it suffers short of quality engineers. To some extent the out look of young engineers and their parents is to be changed so that core industry growth can also be nurtured. The standards of students are fluctuating due to various reasons, and one such reason is the craze over lucrative software placement that the parents inculcate in the brought up of their children.

Another important issue that threatens the managements of self-finance engineering colleges is the migration of faculty from one college to the other for one reason or the other. In fact it has become the order of the day that many qualified and senior faculty members enjoy their seniority through higher emoluments but unable to concentrate on the upliftment of one institution completely. As such the real need of their presence in any one institution can never be fulfilled. While the younger faculty discharge their teaching duties, mostly half heartedly. Lack of required knowledge base may be essentially one of the recognized reasons, and this tendency kills the real spirit of the noble profession of teaching. Disappearance of sense of belongingness on one hand and little knowledge on the other are the two teaching set backs on technical education. Managements are expected to encourage the younger staff to

improve their qualifications and the faculty are to reciprocate their heartfelt belongingness, that paucity of qualified faculty can then be reduced to some extent. Another measure to have standards is to implement a suitable staff retaining policy in the private engineering colleges.

As more and more engineering colleges are being established in these days, recruitment of qualified faculty has become a great problem for the employers as such they compromise with substandard and under qualified faculty. Already the level of the students is at a great loss that added to under qualified faculty obviously leads to declined quality in technical education. Many colleges suffer from this struggle in a steady way that average and below-average engineering students are loaded with unripen ingredients by the teachers of little knowledge base. There is no need absolutely to worry for the fate of the intelligent students for they can adjust to the situation, however, they may be dissatisfied with the teaching standards. Hence, the out look of management as well as faculty needs to be widened to the extent that it meets the present requirements.

OTHER REALITIES

The dark naked truth is that like a thorn to a rose is basic science to technical education. Whether accepted or not basic sciences, for long time, have been protecting technical education like thorn that protects the rose naturally. However, modern technical educationists, instead of realizing the truth, neglect the significance of the foundation laid by basic sciences claiming that engineering education need to be fully technical. The former President of India, Bharataratna Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in his keynote address at Nagpur Science Congress Association Summit expressed that growth of science and scientific research in India was at a great discount. Craze in technical education kills the scientific temperament, that leads to weak base in basic principles. While developed nations recognize basic sciences as mandatory our technical educationists rate basic

sciences as an extra growth in India. It has become a fancy these day to say science is useless in technical education. Science faculty are being paid less salary, offered no incentives, no career advancement in 80-90 percent of private engineering colleges. Infact, science and humanities faculty deal mostly with first year students of engineering graduation, as such they mould the intelligent and innocent freshers to the tune of new environment and change their mindset to accept things as they come in their way. Being ill treated and less paid, the responsible science and humanities faculty may not ignite the amateur brains which inturn leads to dulldrums. The managements of engineering colleges and educationists ought to think differently and nurture the fertile technical education.

Many engineering colleges use to collect feedback from students on faculty which is a right and wise custom. The feedback is to be subjective and suggestive, that is the questionnaire supplied to the young brains must be a real test for the intellectual maturity. Based on that the employer or the higher authority can evaluate the performance of teachers and appreciate or advise them as such.

However, in many technical institutions teachers are being evaluated based on the students' result but not on their personal accomplishment, which may again leads to insecurity among the faculty. As said earlier it is expected that the managements follow certain staff-retaining policy and maintain good standards. However, there should not be any compromise in quality education. Characterless teachers need not be encouraged for whatsoever reason.

These days, many companies visit educational institutions for campus selections in the third year of engineering graduation. For one reason it is fascinating while for many reasons it is discouraging. Grabbing talent earlier is a nice gesture, but many of the selected students are developing a care-not tendency and not concentrating on their final year courses. In

many cases, such students did not fare well in their final year studies. The very reason for this is that they are already employed. All India Council for Technical Education advised both the companies and the institutions to discourage campus selections in the third year. Anna University, Chennai banned third year placement in its jurisdiction, a strategy to be adopted for better future.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing facts and realities, it is expected that the managements, industries, faculty and the student core should interact with each other every often, analyze the current status and redefine the modalities of technical education. A common forum to meet this need and to arrive at a practical solution is to be formed and indeed it is the need of the hour.

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