

Curricular aspect with Special Focus on Skill Development

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 17 July 2018 | Accepted: 02 September 2018 | Published Online: 31 December 2018

DOI: 10.31786/09756272.18.9.2.205

EOI: 10.11208/essence.18.9.2.205

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the impact of the extra-curricular activities as well as vocational training on the social and presentation skills of the students. Social skills to be implemented here is self-discipline, communication skills and self-confidence of the students. The participation of the students in co-curricular activities helps to enhance their students' social skills that will help them in to exhibit the same when they move to corporate world. Mastering social skills is essential as it gives a good impact in generating affirmative relationships of a scrupulous student. Only giving the theoretical knowledge in the class often creates boredom and makes a student a book worm. If any activities are done its leads to enhancement in mental thinking, improves the personality of a student. Another important issue over here is active involvement of the student in these extra-curricular activities outside the classroom environment. This helps him the students to interact with teachers and friends and works as a as a catalyst for social skills development of a student. Involvement in leisure activities also leads to the interaction of students with environment, social and learning inside or outside of the classroom in order to produce excellent human capital development. It will also encourage the development of talent, creativity and students potential to the maximum level. Therefore, the objective of this conceptual paper is to untangle the association between extra-curricular activities and their impact on social skills because it could act as a catalyst for the development of students social skills.

KEYWORDS

Social skills | Extra-curricular activities | Student | Development

CITATION

Srivastava, V. P.; Srivastava, Ankita and Gambhir, Sonia (2018): Curricular aspect with Special Focus on Skill Development. ESSENCE Int. J. Env. Rehab. Conserv. IX (1): 28—34.

<https://doi.org/10.31786/09756272.18.9.2.205>

<https://eoi.citefactor.org/10.11208/essence.18.9.2.205>

Introduction

India's transition to a knowledge-based economy requires a new generation of educated and skilled people. Its competitive edge will be determined by its people's ability to create, share, and use knowledge effectively. A knowledge economy requires India to develop workers—knowledge workers and knowledge technologists—who are flexible and analytical, and who can be the driving force for innovation and growth. To achieve this India needs a flexible education system: basic education to provide the foundation for learning; secondary and tertiary education to develop core capabilities and core technical skills; and further means of achieving lifelong learning.

In the changing world scenario with regard to industry and the job market, there is now an overpowering need for skilled workers. However, the definition of 'skill' in India, and the world in general, has also changed over recent years. India is relatively young as a nation with around 28 million youth population being added every year. More than 50 per cent of its population is below the age of 25 and more than 65 per cent are aged below 35. In 2020, the average age of an Indian will be expectedly 29 years, while it will be 37 for China and 48 for Japan.

As President Pranab Mukherjee said in a recently organised CII event in Kolkata, "We often boast about India's demographic dividend. But the question that arises is what we do with this if we cannot skill them, if we cannot educate them and cannot enhance their employability."

India is a developing country and more than half of its population is under the age of 25. There are various reasons for a country like India to invest in the development of skills of the youth. Particularly education and employment are main areas of concern in this age. According to the UN report; India has the largest youth population in the world. So skill development becomes very important issue for the development of the nation.

Skill development is a process in which youth of India is enabled in a large number to acquire skill based training and become employable and earns their livelihood. As they are the future of country it is very important that they either should work or they can start their own venture. It will also help in eradicating unemployment. According to UNESCO, "Youth" is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. There are many reasons for a country like India to invest in the skill development of the youth.

- It will eradicate unemployment and poverty.
- Increasing capacity & capability of existing system to ensure equitable access to all.
- It will promote lifelong learning, maintaining quality and relevance, according to changing requirement particularly of emerging knowledge economy.
- It will channelize the vast potential of indigenous man power.
- It will transform India into a diversified and internationally competitive economy.
- On July 15, 2015 to enable Indian economy and industry to benefit from the country's young work force Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched schemes:
 - National Skill Development Mission
 - National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
 - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (Prime Minister Skill Development Scheme)
 - Rural India Skill
 - Skill Loan Scheme

Though government of India is taking initiative, alone it cannot accomplish this task. This should be incorporated in the curriculum. Constructive learning has to be part of the curriculum. Situations and opportunities have to be created for students to provide students with challenges, encourage creativity and active participation for students. Students have to be encouraged to

interact with peers, teachers and older people which would open up many more rich learning opportunities. Just giving a theoretical knowledge in a class will make the class boredom and make a child book worm. Learning has to be practical and vocationalised in this time.

Learning should be an enjoyable act where children should feel that they are valued and their voices are heard. The curriculum structure and school should be designed to make school a satisfactory place for students to feel secure and valued. The curriculum should focus on the holistic development of the students to enhance physical and mental development in individuals and as well as with the peer interactions.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 is one of the four National Curriculum Frameworks published in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005 by the National Council of Educational Research and Training NCERT in India. The Framework provides the framework for making syllabii, textbooks and teaching practices within the school education programmes in India. The NCF 2005 document draws its policy basis from earlier government reports on education as Learning without Burden and National Policy of Education 1986-1992 and focus group discussion. After wide ranging deliberations 21 National Focus Group Position Papers have been developed under the aegis of NCF-2005. The state of art position papers provided inputs for formulation of NCF-2005. The document and its offshoot textbooks have come under different forms of reviews in the press.

Its draft document came under the criticism from the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE). In February 2008 the director Krishna Kumar in an interview also discussed the challenges that are faced by the document. The approach and recommendations of NCF-2005 are for the entire educational system. A number of its recommendations, for example, focus on rural

schools. The syllabus and textbooks based on it are being used by all the CBSE schools, but NCF-based material is also being used in many State schools. Curriculum development is the practical aspects of management of curriculum. The basic assumption of management concept is that no systems perfect. Therefore, there is the need to improve and modify the system empirically. As these perspectives change, so the curriculum will change through the process known as curriculum development or curriculum reform.

Stages of Learning

The employable skills apart from the core skills should be introduced to school students from an early age of 6-7 years onwards in an incremental manner.

Primary school (classes 1 to 5) (age 6 to 11):
Communication skills, attitude, adaptability and IT skills

Middle school (classes 6 to 8) (age 11 to 14):
Above skills plus self-management, teamwork, creativity

Secondary education (classes 9 to 10) (age 14 to 15):
Above skills plus stress management, self-motivation

Upper secondary (classes 11 to 12) (age 16 to 17):
Above skills plus initiative, interpersonal sensitivity

Higher education (graduation or professional programmes):
Above skills plus commercial awareness, problem solving, lifelong learning

What are Skill Development Indicators?

Skills and knowledge are driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. Given that developing skills requires huge investments, it is necessary to have availability of real time data on what constraints skill development in a region/area/district/state; identification of sectors where skill development is most needed; how well the skills of individuals match those required in the labour market, and the

outcomes of various interventions undertaken thus far.

The first such efforts to create Indicators for skill development has been made by the OECD that established the World Indicators of Skills for Employment (WISE) in close collaboration with the World Bank, ETF, ILO and UNESCO. The conceptual framework includes focus on contextual factors such as GDP, population, access to internet, employment in informal sector; factors affecting skill acquisition such as educational attainment, literacy rate, enrolment ratios, vocational programme, participation in apprentices and training; factors affecting skill requirement such as employment share by level of education, occupation, incidence of self-employment, skill use and outcomes in terms of growth in GDP, labour productivity, employment rate, earnings etc. The focus is on identifying skill gaps, changes in earnings and unemployment by education.

The Skill Development Indicators (SDI) would bring the available data from different sources at one place as a single resource for the purpose of evaluation of skill development initiatives across the country. The SDI would enable the states to evaluate and compete with their own past performances and comparing the changes in the indicators from time to time will make it possible to track improvement or progress of states and of different skill development programmes. The indicators would also facilitate sharing of best practices across different sectors and States/UTs. It would help in assessing the match between employers' needs and future labour market opportunities. Based on the assessment of existing policy initiatives and their outcomes, the future course of policy action can be planned or modified. The indicators have been classified under broad parameters of Access, Equity, Quality, Relevance and Finance. The parameter of access would measure the capacity and outreach of the programmes. Relevance would measure the

ease of entry to the labour market with an enhanced employability.

Equity will measure the equal accessibility of the opportunity to all and quality will evaluate whether the training imparted meet the required standard of employability. For instance, the indicator on Compliance Rate of National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) will explain the extent of adherence of courses to established standards. And finally, the parameter of finance would measure the cost-effectiveness of the funding. The dearth of reliable data is a pressing challenge in developing these indicators. However, the creation of indicators itself is expected to catalyse the availability of reliable data on a periodic basis. This push is also for the need to generate data on a space that is leading up to the labour market and will also emphasize on the need of systematically including key questions on skills in employment-unemployment surveys such as the Periodic Labour Force Surveys. Once the indicators are finalized, an index can be built that can rank the States based on their performance outcomes. This assessment at the national level would facilitate in coming up with mid-course corrections in policy and implementation strategy. The measurement of outcomes will also throw light into various skill development models that are successful and bring out the best practices for further emulation. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution round the corner, it needs to be ensured that our youth thrives any shift in the skill requirements in both foundational soft skills and skills specific to different job roles. Thus the need of the time is to build the evidence that can redirect the policy solutions to address the constraints, make the policy inclusive and sustainable according to the demographic context of each state to realize the potential of youth bulge and make India skill capital of the world.

Learning and knowledge

Learning should be an enjoyable act where children should feel that they are valued and their voices are heard. The curriculum structure and school should be designed to make school a satisfactory place for students to feel secure and valued. The curriculum should focus on the holistic development of the students to enhance physical and mental development in individuals and as well as with the peer interactions. In order to bring about the overall development of the students, adequate nutrition, physical exercise and other psychosocial needs are addressed the participation in yoga and sports is required. Learning should be made enjoyable and should relate to real life experiences learning should involve concepts and deeper understanding. Adolescence is a vulnerable age for students and the curriculum should prepare the students and provide support for social and emotional support that will inculcate positive behaviour and provide skills essential to cope with situations that they encounter in their lives, peers pressure and gender stereotype. Inclusive education to be given priority and flexibility to follow a curriculum to suit the needs of every student irrespective of students having disabilities. The foundation should be laid strong and firm. primary, upper primary and middle school should provide the space for children to explore and develop rational thinking that they would imbibe in them and have sufficient knowledge of concepts, language, knowledge, investigation and validation procedures.

School and Classroom Environment

Physical environment has to be maintained favourable to students in terms of infrastructure, adequate light and ventilation, student teacher ratio, hygiene and safe environment. Schools should also treat students with equality, justice respect, dignity and right of the students. Give equal opportunities for all students to participate

in all activities without any bias. Policy of inclusion has to be part of the school where differently abled and children from marginalized section get equal opportunities. The schools should also be well equipped with libraries, laboratories and educational technology laboratories.

Co-Curriculum

Extracurricular activities is also a form of education that being taught outside of the classroom. Through extra-curricular activities, the students will be educated in the form of spiritual, leadership, teamwork as well as self-confidence. Participation in these activities will provide the essential skills provided in these activities as well as fostering a healthy lifestyle. Extracurricular activities can strengthen the interaction between the students and at the same time promoting integration between the races as well as nurturing decencies, independencies, hard work, disciplined and obedient to the law which develops the students into becoming a useful citizen (Wee Eng Hoe, 1994). Therefore, co-curricular activities are capable to improve social skill among students which will also help them in the future career prospects.

Communication

Students who have the communication skill will openly listen and convey a message in a convincing manner. They can tolerate and convey the emotions according to the message. The honest communication as well as mutual understanding when dealing with difficult issues will make them ready in sharing information completely. Those who have these skills encourage open communication, which states the norms explicitly, expectations and as well as politely reprove other individual's improper action. This individual is also willing to accept any good or bad news calmly.

Factors in the Indian education system that prevent skill development of students

The Indian education system puts maximum emphasis on bookish knowledge. Hence, when an individual graduates, he/she struggles to apply this knowledge in the real life scenario. From primary to upper secondary, the subjects covered in the school curricula are the languages (mother tongue/regional/foreign), mathematics, science and technology, social science, art education, physical training etc. It will be observed that the curricula do not cover components of employable skills nor is there any option to introduce students to different vocations. The Indian education system does not consider the component of skilling in its curriculum. The option of vocation education is limited to certain boards, which do not cater to the larger target audience. In India there are different boards that follow different systems/curriculum.

The Indian education system adopts a top-down approach where major initiatives and strategies get rolled out at 35000 ft in university board rooms and council. However, the approach needs to be bottom up where the students and faculty at the last mile should be the focus.

The two major reasons of skill shortage are faculty and facility. The faculty's role needs to change; it needs to flip around in a way that the teacher facilitates the overall learning of students rather than only distributing notes.

The facility or infrastructure of a lot of schools needs to be upgraded as per 21st century requirements, which will in turn encourage 21st century skills that students can adapt.

According to the recent City and Guilds Group's Skills Confidence report, about 95 per cent of India's labour force lack formal vocational skills. While the education system and the skill development domain has its own set of challenges and limitations, there is a need to transform the way we skill our youth as many-a-time, students

have been found to be unemployable due to lack of practical knowledge.

Conclusion

Considering the Indian population, there is an acute need for training the young workforce, just to shape them in a better way. In today's scenario there are ample opportunities that one can choose from and excel in. However, the Indian thought process is more clued on to the typical traditional academic streams and careers in the field of engineering, medicine, accounts, MBA etc. There have been numerous instances where a student is pushed in to a particular field due to parental/peer pressure only to realise at a later stage in life about his/her passion or calling in life and to start all over again from scratch.

Introduction to skill training at a young age will by all means give the student an opportunity to explore various options and accordingly, narrow down on a vocation of his/her liking. There are also those set of students who are not able to cope with main stream education. This could be because of economic reasons or academic incapacities. So what are the options available to them, such that they lead a dignified life without being exploited or being vulnerable? Introducing skill training at a young age will go a long way in directing these students to opportunities that will have a larger impact on the general fabric of the workforce in this country.

Apart for these, introducing students to some of the employable skills mentioned above will also help them prepare and adapt to real work situations without much effort. It will ease the transition phase from being a student to being a professional.

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