



BRAJ KISHOR GUPTA
 Director & Chief Mentor
 Giant Step
www.giantstep.in

Bridge The Skill Gap

Background:

Education in India appears to be the most lucrative industry. Education, as a booming sector, attracts all moneyed people from across the globe. This often provides a respectable platform to convert the black money into white money. Starting an Education Institute in India is still considered to be a noble job. This may be because education in

this county acts as the only liberating force, especially for the poor and marginalized sections of society. Indian society is proverbially known for the varied differences and diversities that include castes, sub castes, clans, customs, mores, Law of karmas, which might defy all scientific scrutiny and rationalization. But we need to accept this as the fact of life even in 21st century India. However, against this backdrop, Education seems to be the only savior. There is no denying the role of education in differentiating a developed society from a developing one. Education in India, in particular, proves to be the 'Agent of Change,' for it empowers an individual,

irrespective of his caste, creed and religion. Indian parents are well aware of the far reaching significance of Education. This is indicated from a survey report released by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) that Indian families are investing heavily on their children's education. Education in our multilingual and multi-cultural society also helps in breaking away from the vicious and debilitating custom and tradition that promotes what is inherited rather than what is achieved by the individual. Education, especially the professional one, has much wider an appeal among the rich and the poor alike. It is believed that professional education like Engineering enhances the career prospects of students manifold as compared to those students who opt for Humanities or routine courses like Bachelors and Masters.

Reality Bite:

It is a matter of grave concern that as per the NASSCOM Report, hardly a 10% of our Graduates are found employable. Recent surveys on Engineering and Business Students indicate that only less than 24% of them are employable. A large number of professionally qualified people are also not found Industry- ready. Hence, there is a deepening crisis of jobs for the millions of youth in the country. The yawning gap between the ever rising number of educated youth and their abysmally low rate of employment is a real cause of worries and concern both for the parents and the students. Many blame the choice of their colleges; others attribute their plight to Economic dip in the country. Sadly, most colleges are not much bothered about the fate of their students after the admission is done. They prefer to play ducks and drakes with students' money by giving attractive advertisements and false publicity rather than inviting the seasoned professionals and Corporate Leaders to the Campus, which could help the students in getting job ready. It has also become a fashion to invite some cine-stars or TV actors these days. Many colleges are promoting new culture of hiring brokers to get students from states like North East, Bihar, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand as also from some Asian countries. I still remember how the Dean of a popular college in South India wanted to offer me 75,000 rupees just for helping him get one student. I was simply shocked but soon I came to know that it is a profitable business, so much so that many students

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who were the victims once choose to recover their money by getting some students for their respective colleges. Generally management quotas are for sale, where merit of the students does not matter much. Is this not a classic case of the prostitution of talent in the country?

Against this backdrop, it would be interesting to find out more reasons for the existing sorry state of affairs in Education.

Needs Analysis:

It is important to accept the gravity of the situation. Only then, could we proceed to find out what exactly ails our education system. Why do our youth fail to get suitable employment after passing out from their Educational Institutes?

It would be pertinent to mention here the considered views of Mr NR Narayana Murthy, Infosys Chairman. He attributes the poor employability rate of Engineering Graduates to the existing education system, which is completely divorced from real life situations and skills.

There is a grain of truth in the observation of Mr. Murthy. It is a fact that the skill development is directly linked to the productivity as well as employment growth. The need for quality skill development and up- gradation assume added significance. The point

