

THE EXTENT OF HARMONY BETWEEN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS A MEASURE FOR TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

When all efforts are aimed at overall prosperity, any initiative is directed towards betterment over what prevails. At any stage, improvements are necessary, even if it is a question of maintaining a fixed level. Since the usual trends are mostly to tend to reduce the efficiency of a system, to maintain a level additional reinforcements towards improvement are necessary. This progressive effort is to be regulated so as to maintain an optimal level, the efforts becoming neither excessive nor insufficient. For the context of the subject matter as enunciated in the title, through out the text of this article, developmental levels would be referred in a relative sense. A progress is made when the standards have been raised from a lower level to a higher level by a certain well stipulated criteria. Without implying a miserable state when a lower developmental level is referred to as undeveloped, a progress made would be referred to be resulting a higher level of developed stage; again, not meaning that this higher developed stage is ideal. One would find that this article would build up a view point, that the two complementary efforts as in the Academic Institutions and Industrial Organizations must only be providing support and reinforcement to each other mutually and the Industry cannot duplicate the efforts in the Academic Institutions. Thus it is necessary to delineate criteria for the aims and purposes of the two different sectors so that there is no mix up of objectives resulting in redundant activities, but the people in one wing or sector must find the activities of other sector as an interesting alternative, in particular when at the higher educational stages individual's progress is to be for promoting a welfare accent to individual's accomplishments based on the talent and skill. While individual improves in his ability it brings a tangible benefit to other members and associates in the employment circle. A leadership quality is not too far away from the purview. These complementarities of Academic Institutions and the Industrial Organizations should provide the required dynamism to make progress and to ensure the total quality management.

INTRODUCTION

This article is meant for the student level appreciations of the problems with which people at the helm of affairs of the Educational technology and Industrial development are all the concerned. Thus it can come under the category of an article to benefit students rather than the Educational administrators. Even though it does not directly targeted to appeal to people who are leaders, if this article can appeal at the student's level, benefits can accrue in the form of consolation that the students get used to, by which they can face the rough weather with better confidence.

The objectives of preoccupation in an Industrial Organization are different from that of the students and teachers in an Academic Institution. Even though most of the public know there is such a difference, many of them do not know what exactly these differences are. This statement applies not only to the common public, but in most of the occasions, even when Industrialists and Academicians try to answer questions the replies are not convincing; this may be concerning the accountability on what is being accomplished, or the purposes and profitability for which the future projections are being set out. This situation vitiates the quality of management while trying to manage to maintain targeted levels of quality of the industrial venture and the academic pursuits. Mutually, each of the two sectors finds that the other sector is not appreciative of the needs of a specified sector. If this uncongenial disposition is turned into a harmonious diffusion which enables the permeation of the mutual concerns across the separating lines, then this would be the mark of a total quality management. Then the assessment and accreditation process can lead to a true awareness of the standards so that the personnel can strive to improve upon the current achievements to accomplish better returns on the inputs, the investments.

DEFINING THE GUIDELINES

It must be admitted, that education is not primarily to impart isolated knowledge and skill to any particular individual, but, the educational institutions are supposed to effectively convey to the learners well standardized information, which are known to all the other qualified individuals. This is an experience every individual must go through even though several others have already become masters in such matters. This aspect can be appropriately referred to as the Development of the Individual, in other terms Human Development. At this stage it is the duty of the particular individual to prove the personal capability for a comparative gradation of the individual's ability with respect to the known levels of achievements as known from the other individuals. As the levels of education become higher, the individual becomes capable of appreciating the differences among individuals while set out to perform the one and the same task, and strive to improve upon the standards set by others. Sooner, this aspect of being able to stand out as exceptionally good fetches trainees who wish to learn the state of the art from the individual who has been proved to be exceptionally good at accomplishing the set out task. At this stage the demand is as a resource person for the reason that the individual has qualified as an exceptional performer. While the individual thus becomes a Human Resource, unless the Human Development process is inherent, Human Resource Development would not be possible. At this stage a machinery which permits the transfer of the know-how to others from an expert becomes necessary, and the industrial concerns are such machineries, where the several employees get the necessary know how by their contribution to productivity. A continued Human Resource Development due to the persistent Human Development is the phenomenon to be acknowledged in an Academic Institution. The Developed Human Resource being tapped for production of material goods which are the amenities for the public to provide for congenial living conditions. In turn, congenial surroundings and favorable environmental factors are a must for Human Development. Thus the activities of humans need not be flowing in closed circles only, but can have intersections in the loops to appropriately channelize for efficient use of the available resource. Such thoughtful guidelines enable a quantitative treatment of the resource utilization for conveniently measuring the values.

ADMISSION TO STUDENTS & APPOINTING EMPLOYEES

A student in an academic institution is given a task or assignment mainly for the student to find out how to know the things related to working out and learns a particular topic so as to become an expert in the subject matter. This is to ensure that the student becomes a Resource Person to any one who would want to employ for this resourcefulness. A student encounters a variety of vagaries while learning a topic which is typical of the students own making while finding ways to get clarifications. The competition which the students face is a question of winning incentives for a better performance of acquiring knowledge reflected by grades secured. Better students have better prospects of employment. Absolute grades secured always are conditioned by relative merits set by competitiveness as criteria.

An employment is a task set for an organization, in which the employee would put in effort as in a team. Thus the required skill must have been acquired by the individual, and that employee must be prepared to make this skill available routinely without much variations and uncertainties. The employee encounters of a variety of coworkers as other employees in the organization and opinions might differ on how a particular task is to be carried out even when all of the team may be going through the same act to accomplish the same task in every employee's work table. The monthly remuneration is ensured, for which an individual seeks employment, provided the employee maintains a certain minimum set standard. This sets a question of competition in efficiency. Trying to get better emoluments while in service depends mainly on how much the individual is in need of the increased earning power, while a minimum is assured.

This above descriptions of a student's task at trying to go through a learning process not conditioned by the assured income and the consequential strings attached to it must stand as distinctly different from an employee's job requirements, stipulated service conditions and terms and conditions of employment to ensure a regular payment and adequate earning power. Most of the time the academic pursuits and the routinely carried out work schedules cannot be part of an individual's activity simultaneously. Thus the undirected free movement for learning may not be rewarding much in terms of financial return during the learning stage which is essentially oriented towards individual's Human development. At what ever level an individual can stand up competitively as a Resource Person, an employment would be conferred. This is a kind of certification to the Human Resource Development, for which the credit is to be shared by the individual who has been going through the Human Development programs, and the institution which enabled and facilitated Resource Development process during the Human Development. Similarly, when a certification to the level of Human Resource Development is ensured by an employment to the individual, the employees must provide for a Human Development during the employment if an individual exhibits enough potential for further Development as individual during the preoccupation in service of the organization. This way of the systems providing for mixed components with primary emphasis on one of the two components is the harmony alluded to in the title for this article.

In the context of those who are at the beginning of their career and while inquiring about their interests and inclinations, the most often used terms referring to "Basic research" and "Applied research" reflects a confused situation while distinguishing the task as to secure a Degree Certificate, or an Employment with good emoluments. Categorizing, the kind of research that it is, which an individual is pursuing, is itself an academic exercise. Where as, the focus in Industrial organization is productivity and profits.

CAN THE R & D WING IN INDUSTRY HAVE ADEQUATE ACADEMIC COMPONENT

To solve the problems that arise as a consequence of the requirement to make academic research outputs industrially viable, and to enhance the economic factors in the industrially viable projects the Research and Development wing can be envisaged. Most of the time the activities, which result in prosperous industrial propositions, are the academic activities which are pursued, not always with explicitly spelt out advantages to humanity. It is mostly projected as an activity of high intellectual caliber and the results immediately appealing to common man is not the criterion. Thus, from the criterion of the appreciation by public for the research results, these activities, which turn out to be profitable industrially, cannot be declared before hand as activities intended for profitability. Naturally, there should not be surprise if there are resistances if these activities at the initiation level are located at a Research and Development Centre of an industrial concern. To the R & D wing, the problems flow from the industrial activity with a well specified target of how it is to improve the industrial process. And, thus the results flow back into the production front. Can such a development towards a closed cycle operation be truly an academic exercise to be promoting a freedom in the advancement of knowledge and skills to add to the Human Development index? On the contrary, how long in a person's career, such a Human Development can be sustained without a profitability criterion being built in by the usefulness of the activity to other beings? This deliberation seems to indicate that a corrective measure in anticipation would be necessary for any possible unforeseen conflicts. Thus the relevant questions to be concerned with are: (1) how to set up such a structure which ensures that the employees at R & D centers maintain a spirit of the academic atmosphere; and, (2) how to inculcate a sense of accountability in academic institutions, in terms of the sense of values which prevail in an industrial organization.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE ACADEMIC COMPONENT

Most often, the requirement in an academic pursuit is to get a good grade, as is provided in a Certificate (could be a Degree certificate) which ensures as a qualification to compete for employments. But, in this certificate what is endorsed is the Human Development Index and what is not obvious in this index is the Human Resource Development criterion. It is this uncertainty about the Resourcefulness, of the individual who has passed out meritoriously a curriculum stream, which becomes a point debatable at the time of appointing the individuals, particularly by industrial organizations. If a person is capable of adapting unconventional means in securing high marks, it is not simple matter to recognize as an extraordinary talent or an undue bias and favor in play during the evaluation process. Since the success in examination has to be at the first instance with a high merit, passing out with high marks as a consequence of several trials would mean that the individual could not qualify at the first instance, which would carry a negative impression to the success at first attempt. If a person passes out with high merit through out at every stage, consistently good record would be the merit index.

This consistently good record could be due to the first impression the student has created among the teachers during the academic career, and the remaining stages of evaluation accredited merit mainly because of the first impression, and at every subsequent stage after the first stage, the evaluation might not have been independent of any "first impression" bias.

It is this negative possibility which has set up a precedence in the academic evaluations which discourages the industrial organizations to acknowledge the merit and high ranks as dependable for durable Resourcefulness of the individuals. Thus the industrial organizations set criteria, for appointments, which are obviously outside the purview of the academic evaluations. This results in the discontent of proliferating proverbial "educated unemployed":

OUTLOOK FOR A DURABLE STRATEGY

At the primary level and formative years, the students are given exercises under the category of "Socially Useful and Productive Work" as a part of curriculum. At higher levels of education, when the specialization in subject of study requires full-time attention of the student, more or less a narrowing down of the outlook becomes a consequence that the successful candidates cannot consider anything else under their purview than their curriculum. Even the multi-disciplinary accents and interdisciplinary outlook in their subject study becomes a casualty. Thus while getting their higher degree courses, with the eclecticism built in the students become routine workers for implementing the tasks and only qualified to spend the time only to carry through the every day exercises which that environment puts them into. Once out of the study environment after getting their degree, the students do not know simply how to spend the time. Seeing this plight of the seniors and their contemporaries, the fresher become only a despondent and drop out of academic pursuits. At this stage which ever way becomes lucrative to earn a lively hood seems a way out of uncertainties. This reduces the quality of the students getting into the academic and basic research studies. The tendency would be to become more and more dependent on "Outside Resources" without ones own eligibility by becoming a better individual: the unduly less emphasis on "Human Development". The academic circles would be blaming the Industrial sectors for luring away the students from academic pursuits.

While the employment procedures, by the similar considerations, are rampant with superficiality of knowledge and a mere familiarity with the topics as the built in criteria for selections rather than the real ability to learn a subject matter thoroughly and the intense study and the grasp of the fundamentals. In particular when the considerations are in a

region which is not well developed, even to be uttering certain terms, without knowing why and how they are becoming familiar with such advanced technological terms, causes a surprise and an impression of highly knowledgeable candidate for selection. The superficiality and light hearted ways are misconstrued for "Resourcefulness" required in for enterprises. The familiarity with exuded by a candidates because of the tendency to be dependent on "other resources" without any relevance for the real needs and necessities, is misconstrued for higher "Human Resource Development" index. It is true that by their day to day social activities, a backward society gets closer to advanced circles by way of exposure to the current activities in and advanced educated community. But, if the recruiters themselves cannot know anything more about the advances than what is possible by such backwardness, and if they are also empowered to be leaders and strategy evolvers, the real quality cannot be ensured. Thus a mechanism must be emphasized by which it is ensured as to evaluate how people arrive at answers rather than simply looking for right answers, that is the means of learning is to be important than simply the end of uttering right "TERMS" opportunistically as right answers. The roles played by the external evaluators who do not get influenced by the local leaders, in such contexts are very vital. This criterion would find a strong resistance to implement in any community. This is the version of the industrialists when the complaint is floating that the academic institutions do not render the students well qualified for industry oriented tasks and they cannot be employed in industrial concerns even if they had secured High Grades form their examination performance.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

First and foremost, whenever a student learns a particular subject, the student must be made aware of the fact that this particular subject is for the sake of other subject maters and most often could have derived contents from other subjects. For example, a student of Chemistry must try to keep track of how this chemistry subject can be contributing to the advances in other subjects like Physics and Mathematics and how the advances in chemistry could be dependent upon the advances in those subjects. A student of life sciences must be aware as to how the Life sciences are benefiting from the advances in Physical Sciences, and how it is contributing to the understanding of the topics physical sciences. This means, when a student is specializing in a particular subject, his appreciation of the context for other subject must be ascertained. This is the necessity in the limit, to inculcate the trend to consider oneself as contributor to the welfare of others while making progress in one own interest. But, the tendency is usually, in the name of specializing a person allowed to go about in his own way to ignore the context relevance of what one is doing but only secure get good grades become productive and gain importance only by the fact that the individual stands isolated, but the capabilities are only of average standards and nothing exceptional. Thus the individual avails the available resources and no advantage really flows into the pool of resources.

On the other hand, these individuals of average capabilities from the point of view of resourcefulness, when by a default of the recruiting machinery get into the industrial organizations at relatively higher levels of leadership circles eventually lead to a disillusion about the credibility of the academic institutions and their degree awarding procedures. These individuals only start looking up only for the development of the self only without relevance to the benefit of the organization which employs them. The academic institutions must be able to provide to the employers an assessment about the resourcefulness of the individual, while the candidates are put up for a consideration because of the grades which they have secured. The grades must be uncompromisingly reflecting their skill in the subject of specialization, but once out of the academic institution with this skill, the candidates must be capable of realizing their role in the promotion of interest and welfare of the industrial concerns. That they become aware of such responsibilities is the Development over and above the established fact about their skillfulness in their specialized subject. The industrial organizations must provide the incentive to grow in this awareness, that the human resource development is the much broader aspect of Human Development. Those who have learnt to earn the credits by their day to day performance, than by the periodic certifications only,

would prove to be an asset as persons who are capable of continuous human development which becomes a resourceful endeavor and they do not become a burden on the available resources.

This assessment of the complimentary aspect as well to become inclusive in the accreditation would prove to be sustaining the efforts mutually. This is the harmony which is sought after and trying to evolve a quantitative index for this quality of harmony, would be an academic exercise for the subject of total quality management.

SUGGESTED READING (Created by the author)

- http://www.angelfire.com/art3/saravamudhan/sri_hledu/
- http://in.geocities.com/saravamudhan2002/hrd_mrm.html
- http://in.geocities.com/saravamudhan2002/nmr_for_oil_and_coal.html
- http://www.geocities.com/saravamudhan1944/ugc_inno_proposal.html