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BOOSTING PUBLIC ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS TO VOCATIONAL STUDENTS: A NEW PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment is continuing in all the developing countries and it is increasing over the years. Really, education which is provided both through the formal as well as informal education centers has not created confidence in the student community. On the other hand they have made them depend upon the outside agencies. We need education which is not only competitive, but also seen to be fair, and closely linked to employment opportunities. Opposing the two may be able to satisfy better requirements of both ability and aspiration of the school leaving students. Therefore, it is felt need to respond the deficiencies of the vocational education system through proper industry-institution relation, skill assessment, and on-the-job training on the basis of local needs. Involvement of CSR in term of providing these kinds of value added-vocational and occupational-education would be an innovative start in the Indian system of education both to liberate and empower such marginalised groups of society and to include the excluded in employment opportunities by imparting the needed skills for promoting social entrepreneurship. Hence, the present paper discusses the possible means for the advent of CSR in imparting value added-vocational and occupational-education by analyzing various courses of study and to whom these courses would really be benefitted.

Key words: Vocational Education, Higher Education, Entrepreneur Education, Technopreneur Education, On-the-Job Training, Self-Employment

INTRODUCTION

From days of the pre-independent period, there has been loud cry for the introduction of value added-vocational and occupational-education as the solution to the educational problems of the country endorsed subsequently by several Commissions and Committees of both British and Independent India. The national leaders of India such as Mahatma Gandhi had supported it to be introduced in school education. Value added education is concerned with providing facilities for a sizeable section of students for whom bread-winning is far more important than the pursuit of higher education, and to prevent unemployment by preparing the students for prospective vocations. Indeed, all traditional educational institutions paid scant attention to the educational and training needs of the growing number of persons entering world of work where competence rather than degrees matter. Such institutions are elitist in their approach to higher education, and aimed at preparing students for degrees. In this way the traditional colleges are unable to satisfy the educational needs of the contemporary society and aspirations of the people. Therefore, it is a felt need both to discuss and develop a new paradigm to satisfy the educational needs of the marginalised communities for their livelihood thereby entrepreneurship and hence the advent of corporate in the sphere of education for the benevolent of these sections is inevitable. Prior to discussion on CSR initiatives in offering value added education for marginalized to promote social entrepreneurship it is indispensable to overview the plight of vocational-occupational education being offered in Tamil Nadu at higher secondary school level and the socio-economic profile of the students pursuing vocational-occupational education in higher secondary Vocational Stream of Education (VSE).

VSE IN HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL

Vocational education is concerned with providing facilities for a sizeable section of students for whom bread-winning is far more important than the pursuit of higher education, and to prevent an unhealthy influx into higher education, it is essential to evolve a system of education and training quite apart from general education, which aims to prepare the students for prospective vocations. Vocational programmes at higher secondary stage is as aimed to develop skilled manpower in different occupations through diversified courses to meet the requirements of mainly the unorganised sector and to prepare people for the world of work in general through a large number of self-employment oriented courses, not precluding wage employment orientation of many courses. In order to achieve the aim that is both to reduce the aimless pursuit of higher education and thereby reduce the aimless pursuit of tertiary education, it is inevitable to identify major occupational areas to introduce diversified production and service-oriented courses. Hence, after a careful survey, the following major occupational areas have been identified for introduction in Tamil Nadu and a number of allied vocational subjects have been offered under each area of. Accordingly 7 types of vocational education viz., Agriculture, Home Science, Commerce and Business, Engineering and Technology, Health and Para-medical, Computer Science, and Miscellaneous taught in Tamil Nadu. As of today, 67 vocational courses under the above mentioned seven major vocational areas are being taught in Tamil Nadu, of which 53 courses of the total are being taught at higher secondary level whereas the remaining 14 are at secondary level under the head of Generic Vocational Courses.

It is found from a study conducted on vocational stream of education being offered at higher secondary level in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu that not all the vocational areas. In other words, except Computer Science and Miscellaneous courses like Tourist Guide, Photography, and Music all other vocational areas have been taught at higher secondary level under vocational stream of education. Further it is found that there are 152 higher secondary schools in Tirunelveli district in which 60.5% of them are either government-aided or unaided schools while the remaining 39.5% were

government schools. More than two-third of the total schools are located in rural areas while the remaining 30.1% are in urban. In general, a large majority of the schools of the district both in rural (64.8%) and urban (70.2%) are government-aided schools. As there is wide scope about 55% of the total sample schools (22) offer only Business and Commerce vocational courses, followed by another 18.5% schools that offer Engineering and Technology along with Business and Commerce courses. Another 18% of the total schools offer Engineering and Technology, Health, Agriculture, and Home Science alone. Both Business and Commerce and Health are offered in only one school. However, none of the government-aided schools offer Agriculture; and the same with Home Science by government schools.

Who is Pursuing VSE: While considering the socio-economic and academic background of the students pursuing vocational stream of education, it is found that the students who are third by their order of birth has the maximum chance to pursue vocational education and they have to commute to the school in which they pursuing from an average of 4.5km distance from their place of residence. Their household includes an average of Five members that is they hailed from either medium/small families which earn Rs.3,362/- as their average monthly income. As far as their annual expense for pursuing vocational education is concerned they spent an average of Rs.2,236/- and they secured an average of 284 out of 500 marks in secondary school leaving examinations (S.S.L.C.).

PROMOTION OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH CSR

What the overall discussion indicates that the students pursuing vocational education at higher secondary level were from marginalized social-economic background with the aspiration to pursue education for their livelihood which would be helpful in venturing self-employment in future or would enable them to find a decent-middle level-job in service sectors as education of this kind provide on-the-job training. Indeed, both educational institutions (schools & colleges) and government sectors alone cannot satisfy these students' requirements in terms of thirst for social entrepreneurship through imparting employability in them. Hence, the advent of

corporate is inevitable to extend their social responsibilities in training this adolescent group for the benevolent of the society and nation as well. Therefore, the following would be suggested to make the education as value added one for marginalized to promote social entrepreneurship through CSR initiatives and hence the following would be suggested:

Making Education for Living: The system of education, which India inherited since Independence, has a serious flaw as the higher the students were educated, the farther they were taken away from the life situations. Generally all began to frown upon manual work and favoured toward white-collar jobs. This became the bane of modern society. To improve the likelihood of gainful employment to a proportion of the students can be provided skills by CSR for entrepreneurship and self-employment in identified fields in their domain concerned. In this way, CSR "tracks" them into a career of their interest, at the end of formal schooling.

CSR can Integrate Knowledge and Skills: The students who enrolled polytechnics/ITI/similar vocational institutions/community college are just learning an occupational skill or technique as the term technical training stands for. Further, the technological advancements also suggest that the students might be useful only when they are provided a body of theory with practical knowledge training. Therefore, CSR would cater with a variety of skills, mental and manual, in their chosen field and orient them by practical training at the end their education. It therefore, meets the needs of locality in particular and the country as a whole and affords adequate opportunities and scope for employment to them thus promotes the entrepreneurial skills to the students of it, on the whole.

CSR can Provide On-the-job Training: While academic success is of great importance in the system of vocational-occupational education, there is also a strong focus on preparing students for high skill and employment. The goals of such vocational-education programme being offered at higher secondary level and community colleges, therefore, are to promote career awareness, career exploration through work-site exposure, which encourage rigorous training in them. In promoting such a thirst, the implemented vocational-occupational programmes by design are

collaborating in nature. During the transaction of the vocational-occupational skills, a continuous integration of knowledge and skills takes place both in the schools and community colleges and on-the-job training in the CSR's respective organised or unorganised industries in the skills essential or acceptable for job preference. As on-the-job training is the backbone of the vocational-occupational education, students are taken to a service centre or repair centre or production unit to work of CSR in a real life situation and for this CSR can debut an expert practitioner of the students' guidance. Hence, CSR would inculcate and promote self-confidence; helps to achieve higher goals; engenders adaptability (change of attitude depending upon the situation); learning of new skills (enhancing new skills/knowledge); gives extension of awareness in their chosen vocation; avails preference in job opportunity; engenders leadership quality; and promotes self-control through facilitating on-the-job training.

Apprenticeship Training through CSR: Another aspect of the vocational-occupational education is the linkage of schools with industry. While linkages between schools-colleges and industries catering to the areas relevant to vocational-occupational courses is an important feature of vocational-occupational education, the school enters into a mutually beneficial relationship with a nearby CSR industry to share its facilities, experts, workshops, production-processing exposure etc. and thereby provides opportunities for interns. The relationship would reduce the cost and time spent in the schooling-pursuing vocational occupational education- process. Even though such a system is also availed under the Apprentices Act, 1961 in which the industry eventually employs the workers trained in it CSR also would volunteer for such linkage with educational institutions offering vocational-occupational education.

CSR Let School Leavers Take Something on Completion: In the new form of education system, the vocational-occupational education is designed to provide a corrective to some of the deficiencies of the previous systems and to make it more relevant and meaningful to life. As it diverse the students into different walks of life at the end of Higher Secondary Course and enabling the students after the completion of Diploma in Community Colleges for venturing-establishing own entrepreneurial systems or finding a suitable job in the corporate-service sector concerned. The stream of

vocational education way generates a spirit of initiative and enterprise, self-reliance, and self-confidence in students and instills the dignity of labour in their mind. Moreover, the number of educated unemployed will not swell up because of the offering of training in diversified vocations. The vocationalisation of plus-two programmes tries to reduce the proportion of school leavers in the clerical occupations while raising it in occupations related to production and sectors.

CSR Promotes the Essential Partnership between School and Industry: To improve the collaboration between school and industry the provision for on-the-job training at the CSR concerned industry and employment of the trained personnel in schools has been imposed and at present, vocational-occupational courses in most cases are being run and managed by such sharing facilities. Vocational-occupational education taught at higher secondary level as such creates a healthy partnership between education and other sectors economy and the services, between the school and the CSR factory/firm.

CSR in Conducting On-the-Campus Interview: As the vocational education at higher secondary level intends to prepare students for middle-level occupations in service sector concerned CSR can conduct on-the-campus interview as leading companies and industries doing in engineering-technical and management institutions so that the students can get employment opportunities immediately after the completion of their formal education and therefore the socio-economic status of their family would be improved.

CSR in Vocational-Occupational Survey: A state level vocational survey has to be conducted in collaboration with CSR and to be periodically updated to provide a clear picture on the available employment-entrepreneurship opportunities for all vocational-occupational subject-courses. It is important to note here that the portrayal of available opportunities has to be free from "gender thought" and to be inclusive of both sexes. This "Employment-Entrepreneurship Opportunity Book/ Guide" has to be availed in all higher secondary schools-community colleges. Moreover, this can be widely published once in a year particularly during the time of school-college admissions to orient students towards pursuing these vocational-occupational courses

so that CSR can get the inward supply of trained manpower for their production-processing requirements after the completion of formal education.

CSR & Government Collaboration in Curriculum Designing: Central and State governments can pay due attention with the aid of CSR to include the possible employment area for the application of the learned theory-practical at the end of the each chapter while preparing course materials for vocational-occupational subject-courses. All these possible employment-entrepreneurship areas has to be provided at the end of the text book as "Appendix: Employment-Entrepreneurship Opportunity Spheres" for the respective vocational-occupational subject-course. This can to be done in serious consultation with concerned CSR.

Employment-Entrepreneurship Opportunity Book/Guide: Efforts can be initiated by CSR to provide "Employment-Entrepreneurship Opportunity Book/ Guide" to all the students pursuing vocational-occupational education at free of cost as providing text books at higher secondary school level made available in the respective school during the beginning of the every academic year/while the admission is process. This would be helpful in inculcating vocational-occupational interests in all students, irrespective of sex, by and large it will result in destructing gender dichotomy and thereby inclusion of females in all vocational-occupational areas and inculcating self-confidence to venture entrepreneurial initiatives as their own.

CSR in Achieving Equality and Equity: For achieving the concept of "equality of opportunity" and "equity" which evidences exclusion of socially and economically marginalized students in the sphere of education corporate can educate these students by offering educational scholarships and sponsorships and after the completion they would have been sent for apprenticeship in the industry-corporate sector concerned for their permanent employment.

CSR and Gender Equity: CSR can encourage females to enroll in all vocational-occupational subject-courses, irrespective nature and type. For such the existing attitude and values towards vocational subjects in parents and society as well has to be changed by giving more opportunities to females in the vocations-occupations in their area of specialisation in the corporate-concerned domains. Equality of

opportunities has to be ensured and assured in all employment arenas and hence females can get equal opportunities on par with males in all kinds of employment. If the doors of employment market-the world of work is opened by CSR more females will come forward to pursue vocational-occupational subjects and hence the prevailing gender dichotomy and hence gender discrimination will be vanished thereby gender selective admission in vocational-occupational education will be gradually prevented. As a consequence, females pursuing Vocational/ Occupational/Technical/Professional programmes can be encouraged to take up profession at in their fields of specialisation.

CONCLUSION

While concluding the present discussion on the promotion social entrepreneurship through CSR by analyzing the students pursuing vocational stream of education at higher secondary level we can find a pattern that either second or third birth ordered children has more chance to pursue such a kind of education; hailed from small families which include an average of five members; reside within an average of 4-6 km radius from their place of residence to school/college; secured 55-61 percent out of total marks in annual school leaving examinations that is in SSLC; and average parental monthly income ranged from Rs.3000-4000/-. In short, students pursuing such a kind of education are from socially and economically marginalised sections and if the education that they pursuing is benefitted by CSR in terms of educational scholarships-sponsorships, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, on-the-campus interview, observing equity and providing equality of opportunities by providing employment, and encouraging social entrepreneurship, the vocational-occupational education being taught at higher secondary level would become "*Value Added Education for Marginalised.*"

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