

Chapter 12

Corporate Education in Universities in India

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ABSTRACT

Universities in India were started primarily as examination conducting bodies. It took a few years when academic programmes were initiated. The objective of university education especially in colleges was to train administrative personnel for government departments while there were academic departments in universities that concentrated on pure academic research. Gradually the universities became knowledge centres imparting quality education for all those who desired to enhance their knowledge in desired fields or take up employment in industries. In recent years, the requirement of university education was not just knowledge acquisition but employment oriented. Separation of the professional courses like engineering, medicine, law pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and management studies was a step towards job oriented education. The need to introduce job oriented courses in humanities and sciences became imminent as the number of job seekers increased several folds as years passed by.

INTRODUCTION

The 157 year old University of Madras has recently making great efforts in the past decade to make the University education more meaningful and useful. Changes in the system of education first to semester system, introduction of choice based credit system, modifications in the examination

and evaluation systems first made the system student friendly. Recent developments have been the inclusion of experts from industries in the academic bodies to design the course contents to suit the requirements of the respective industries. The involvement of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) in training the faculty to train in turn the students for employment is a recent

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landmark to make the education in Universities beneficial to the stake-holders, the students. The chapter cites specific examples where corporate education has been a case of mutual benefit to the University and the Industry.

The educational system in India has been undergoing a process of evolution in the last century. One of the characteristic features of the system is its adaptability and flexibility with reference to the requirements and needs of the changing times. A distinct line of semblance can be seen in the ancient and modern systems of education since the basic concept is to inculcate discipline and knowledge. The University system came into existence in the year 1857 with the founding of three Universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The three mother Universities later gave birth to several Universities within their jurisdiction. Currently we have the Central Universities, State Universities, Private Universities and Deemed to be Universities. The development of the Universities in the past few decades from simple examination conducting bodies to knowledge imparting centres has really been phenomenal. The University of Madras is taken as case study to showcase the modifications in the curriculum to first make the system student-employable and then on the road to corporate education.

Several changes in the curriculum of higher education more knowledge oriented modifications were effected at regular intervals in the process of teaching and evaluation. Firstly, the language learning based courses were made subject oriented. The burdensome annual examination system gave way to semester system demanding more focus and hard work besides better teacher-student interaction. Continuous assessment component helped the students to prepare for the final examination. Yet, there have always been apprehensions about the employability of the students doing regular courses. This resulted in evolving newer subjects like management studies, econometrics, tourism,

political science to name a few in the humanities and biochemistry, biotechnology, microbiology, biophysics among the science subjects. Recent additions are bio-informatics and nano-science.

The recent boom in the IT and industrial sectors necessitating quality assured skilled manpower has brought several changes in the academic programmes. It is pertinent to look into some significant changes. Recognition of role of industries in framing syllabi and modifications in basic academic bodies like Board of studies, inclusion of internship programmes, special training programmes for students during summer and winter vacation period are some of the aspects that have found a place in the reformed course contents. The ultimate aim has been the employability of students. The Choice Based Credit System equivalent to the credit system in vogue at several western Universities has been a rather student friendly and skill oriented programme. This system enables a horizontal mobility of students as they are able to take credits for subjects from different faculty. Soft skills like computer knowledge, personality development, spoken English and opportunity to learn foreign languages equip the students for immediate employment. A foundation for the corporate driven academic system has been laid.

Research in the University Departments

The major activity of the departments of the University is research funded generally by the Government funding agencies like the University Grants Commission, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Departments of Science and Technology, Biotechnology, Earth Sciences, Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and respective ministries. The departments and the Universities themselves get upgraded by the UGC based on the

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