

Teaching to Excel

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Abstract

India has an education system which is the envy of many. Our education system trains students to withstand the world competition & emerge victorious. It should be acknowledged that our scholars are equal to, if not more than most of the students who are educated & trained in the developed nations. When it comes to Technical & Professional training, Indian Colleges are simply one of the best options due to their efficient & rigorous training of students. Still, there are some serious lacunas in Technical Education which need a ‘makeover’. This paper will talk about the issues that our Technical colleges face today, in terms of their infrastructure, education of pupils & their subsequent job placements. The paper talks about those issues & challenges that need to be dealt with & which can have a tremendous impact on a student’s professional life. The paper will also talk about the shortcomings in the evaluation system in Technical colleges. It deals with restoring that missing part, which needs to be reshaped & remodelled so that the student finds him/herself fully equipped to face any challenge that life poses.

Keywords: Teaching, technical, college, makeover, education, pupils.

Swami Vivekananda said “Education is the manifestation of the knowledge which is innate in a person.” To bring this knowledge onto the surface, we need Professional Schools & Colleges. In India, it is after the completion of the senior secondary level that a child is enrolled in a vocational training or a Professional College as per their interests, in order to make a career. Technical Training and know-how are essential for the growth of a country. The field is very dynamic & the demands of the industry are high. In this regard, we cannot undermine the importance of colleges which impart technical & professional education to students.

Unlike the past, these days we see many Engineering colleges crop up due to an increasing fondness for the job. With the coming up of many Technical colleges, there is

always the possibility of losing track of quality, & paying attention only to the quantity or the number of students being enrolled. There are some issues which have to be dealt with if proper technical education is to be given to students. National Knowledge Commission (NKC) says that “*Engineering education is among the key enablers of growth for transforming India’s economy*”. We now have eight times the number of engineering colleges than we had twenty years back, and the challenges have only been increasing. Having said this, there are some factors that hamper the growth of any Technical Institution. These factors have to be dealt with so that our Technical Education flows smoothly and produces fine professionals.

Quality of Student Intake

For good technical education to be imparted there should be a filter on who is to be admitted to technical colleges & who should be deemed unfit. Very often, Technical institutions, in order to show their standing, put an emphasis only on increasing the number of students instead of paying attention to the quality of education being given from their side. This poses to be a major handicap where quality is sacrificed at the altar of quantity.

Lack of knowledgeable Faculty and Technical expertise:

Quite often engineering colleges face a dearth of competent teachers to teach engineering subjects. The existing faculty are not qualified to teach or not confident enough to satisfy the pupil’s queries. Often, the teacher are recent pass outs from the same college who work there, till they find any other employment. Mostly, they are not very clear about the concepts themselves and hence are not able to clarify the problems of the pupils. The pupils are reprimanded whenever they raises any query. As a result, the students tend to lose in terms of important knowledge which they would have otherwise gained. Furthermore, many technical colleges recruit old & retired faculty which is neither aware of the latest technology & trends nor are able to teach the students in a proper way. This reduces the quality of education.

Very often, the fresher teachers’ conduct often becomes questionable. Due to lack of any proper training in teaching, they are often seen to mingle with students in a very friendly manner which results in an informal relationship, detrimental to developing a professional relation and environment.

Challenge of Proficiency in Language:

Students from remote areas have done most of their studies in their local language and even the brightest of them find it difficult to understand English. But engineering education is completely in English. This poses to be a barrier in the education process.

Ethics & Values:

The aim of every professional course is to make individuals who are sincere, with the right mannerisms & a proper conduct. Qualities like self discipline, character & integrity are missing from the students’ lives these days. Most students take their College life as a license to do whatever they like. It has been observed that virtues such as obedience, good manners are increasingly been forgotten. These need to be inculcated in

the pupils in case they want to be good & reliable professionals. For this purpose some sort of Moral & Ethical Education is necessary to be given to Engineering students.

Bridging the gap between Urban & Rural Environments:

It is generally seen that pupils who hail from an urban background are aware of their language and communication. But a similar thing cannot be said about students who come from a rural background. This Urban-rural divide needs to be broken down in order to facilitate learning. The diversity in the language and communication skills, culture and practices, etc., of pupils also needs special attention and molding methods. The technical institutions have the best opportunity to bridge the gap taking it as societal responsibility for uniform professional development across the country. Technical education should accord equal importance to science, engineering and technology, since science contributes to engineering and engineering contributes to technology. Also, subjects which fall under the umbrella term of ‘Humanities’ should not be ignored or sidelined. Analytical thinking, intellectual reasoning and research pertaining to industrial development, should be the primary goals. Unlike science, which could remain investigative and fundamental, engineering and technology deliver products.

Lack of Infrastructure & Proper Training Facilities

Many Technical Colleges lack the basic infrastructure required to provide the necessary skills and hands on experience to the pupils. Laboratories are ill-equipped & apparatus is out of date. Computers in the computer Labs are either not updated or upgraded to the latest operating systems & software. In many colleges pupils are just given a demonstration of how an equipment or apparatus works without letting them do it on their own. This hampers the progress of the pupil.

Faulty Evaluation System:

The technical Colleges which are affiliated and given accreditation by the Governing bodies, very often have faulty evaluation system. The Colleges do not want to lose their standing and want to give a hundred percent result .The Faculty members who are in direct touch with the pupils and who are the best judges of their caliber and strengths , are not consulted while making the final evaluation sheets and allotting marks. Moreover, the marks given by the teachers are either changed or the teacher is made to change them according to the direction of the management. Very often the students are aware of this fact and are therefore least bothered to pay attention to their studies, as they know that they will get good marks.

Ways to Overcome the Hurdles

It is not that the above mentioned obstacles cannot be overcome. It would require just a little prudence, hard work and awareness on the part of the management to deal with the various issues discussed. Some of the strategies that can be adopted are:
Quality of Intake of the students should be improved. Selections should not only be made on account of who could pay a higher fee, but solely on the basis of their merit, talents and abilities. This would also take care of the fact that only students who deserve a seat in the college would be given admission therein.

Trained & Qualified Staff & Faculty should be recruited to teach technical students. A teacher acts as a facilitator and also a role model for the students. Care should be taken in the selection of Faculty members & people with no experience or training should not be selected.

Even if the Faculty is well qualified & properly trained, it becomes the duty of the management of the college to conduct regular inspections & also take regular feedback from the heads of the departments & also from the students about the teachers taking a particular subject.

The Laboratories should be well maintained & equipped with the latest apparatus. Computer Labs should have the latest software installed in the systems. Students should also be made aware of the upcoming software and technologies. They should be allowed to conduct experiments, first under the guidance of the Faculty and later, similar experiments on their own.

Students should be given training in Moral & Ethical concerns. To facilitate this, a Human Values cell could be set-up in colleges. Eminent speakers from all walks of life should be invited to address students on the issues relevant to proper Moral and ethical conduct.

A Language Lab is the tool by which the hesitation of pupils regarding English Language can be removed. Students should also be asked to give presentations on topics of their choice, so that the element of stage fear can be removed. Also, setting up of such a Lab would enable the teachers to tell pupils about the essential soft skills required to become a complete professional.

It should be the foremost aim of every education to enable students to understand things clearly. For this purpose, learning by rote should be discouraged.

The faculty teaching the students should be consulted before computing the marks of the students. Their advice, suggestions & views should be given due consideration and should be given proper respect.

Accreditation Bodies should connect themselves only with those Institutions which have a proper infrastructure & Faculty needed to teach the technicalities of the Profession to the students. The Affiliation of all Colleges which do not meet the parameters should be cancelled.

It is very essential to consider how today technologies can be effectively used to achieve the desired goals. The above mentioned points have to be kept in mind in case we want to produce good professionals, who are capable of managing themselves & also prove to be an asset & pride for the society.

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