



Human Development- necessity of grassroots approach

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Human development is a basic necessity, and need not be only through formal education system. If I look back down the memory lane, I find many instances of informal human development.

In my village, I had come across an old man with hardly any education, but whenever he talked about the finer points of Ramcharitmanas, he was an authority and I have not found anyone like him till date. In my college, some teachers with much lesser qualifications stunned me and many.

During my professional career, I found dozens who were almost like Viswakarma so far the mechanical trouble-shootings were concerned. I remember Naidu, Patra, PC Sharma or TP Ghosh to name a few, who could translate any new idea that I wanted to get implemented into machining operations. In every areas of automobile manufacturing that I was concerned with, I found great brains. I used some to get trained newcomers. But the formal system hardly recognizes this potential. I kept on working hard and going up the ladder, but kept the educating my subordinate as one of the prime interests. I used to write troubleshooting checklists on different machining processes and circulate among the subordinates. And that was my way of developing the people. Ultimately, it got published as book through Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi.

Unfortunately, the system doesn't allow and encourage the real skilled persons in industry or in the social groups to train new recruits or the unskilled one that are in plenty all around. The country such as India needs skilled hands in millions that can go straight to work in housing industry, or many other service and manufacturing sector. However, it is difficult to find employable young men and women who can straight be put to work.

The country produces near million commercial vehicle including heavy, and light such as autos. Passenger cars are additional. The country needs at least a million drivers. Are we having sufficient number of institutes to cater to this requirement? Unfortunately, what we see in form of cars displaying the name of the driving schools in every locality of the country hardly does a right job of training. And have you tested any of those new drivers yourselves? If you employ one, you can see him learning driving at your cost after damaging the car. The country requires huge number of motor mechanics, electricians, plumbers, and masons. And

the country hardly does have the facilities. Let the best of the skilled hands be used as trainers as an additional responsibility and with extra remuneration or allow them to do that as profession with some fee. Let there be many independent but honest certifying agencies to issue the certificate of skill after proper examination and practical tests so that the successful ones can join the job straight in a day or two with productivity level of the average older employees.

Many of us would have read about Lalmuni Devi, the woman who started growing mushrooms in her shanty or Anita Kushwaha, the bee-keeping girl. Why were not these entrepreneurs used to train many more like them to get them out from the curse of poverty? Perhaps it is because of the mindset of those who wish to perpetuate the poverty of such persons for vested interest. Let me confess even after completing mechanical engineering from IIT, Kharagpur, the best of the time, I was hardly of any worth to the company. I took years to learn my job, as I wanted that. I did contribute on every machine that came under my jurisdiction. But I have seen many who get retired without learning anything of engineering. Those days have gone and today with heavy competition the employer can't afford to spend so much of time and resources on new employees. Specializations have increased. Employers seek ready stuff.

It certainly means that the level of interactions between the academic curricula and industry are hardly proactive to take care of the gap. The education needs reengineering. The sector requires innovative leaders and full autonomy with accountability. Here too a ranking by some regulatory authority may be essential with tremendously growing crops of the private institutes.

Industrial enterprises have also failed in shouldering this responsibility. Infosys boasts of making 20,000-Rupee millionaires, but why should not it come out with data on furthering education levels of its employees? How many of its employees who entered as ordinary science graduates could get qualified as graduate software engineers or computer scientists with Master or PH.D while working in the company? How many of office assistants could get qualified as cost accountant or chartered accountants? How many of the employees could be encouraged to hold some patents? How many of its employees could become entrepreneurs because of the encouragement from the



company? I wish if even the 100 top companies of the country take up the mission to developing the human resources with right earnestness, the economic scenario in the country will change considerably for innovation and entrepreneurship.

As I knew from nearer quarters both TELCO (present Tata Motors) and to a smaller extent Hindustan Motors had set up good training scheme with facilities for various trades. Unfortunately, over the period the importance of the training got diluted. In HM, the management and the union, both were the killers of a scheme that could have provided constant flow of already trained workforce.

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Even the educational institutes fail in pursuing this task of human development. Why an institution can't transform its teachers and even its ordinary employees into best educated talents? I wish even IITs could have taken initiatives to upgrade the teaching skills of its teachers. At least in my time, there were just few teachers who could command respect for their knowledge or for the content they taught.

Let us agree that the formal education must demolish its set pattern and innovate to work differently to meet the requirements of the society that it serves.