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A Study on Challenges to Bridge the Gap between Academia and Industry – With Reference To Post Graduation Courses from Industrial and Students Perspective

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Abstract

A change in today's society has made the industry to adopt many changes from a static, structured, process oriented business model to the digital era which is carried by flexible working, skilled teams and technology at the tip of finger. Accordingly educational institutions cannot remain at the backend as it forms the basis of everything we do. In the present education system, a vast gap exists between what is being taught to the students and what is expected by industry, which primarily leads to reduced employability.

Presently, the trend has changed from having just an academic degree alone to developing soft skills, like behavioural skills, communication skills and very importantly the skill to adapt to new learning which is beyond reading books, skills like disruptive ideas, critical thinking and innovative methods of problem solving as the main thrust which is making industries more competitive. This paper has made an effort to analyse the gap between industry and academia and what changes can be made for better learning to students from institution end.

Key Words: Challenges, Changes to be accepted, Demand for present need, National Education Policy 2020.

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in every one's life. It makes students better citizens by cultivating values and good discipline, and also helps them to be technically sound to compete with outer world. Academia and industry are compared to seed and tree, a single seed has all components and is completely integrated to become a tree, so in order to bridge the gap between academia and industry we need to create the seeds in academia so that they become fruitful trees when they go into industries. Analysing the question of how to transform a seed into useful tree is a big challenge in front of academicians, on the other hand, recruitment has become tuff as industries demand some specific skills from students and universities were struggling to do that in the past, now all universities are taking efforts to upgrade the skills.

A lot of positive hopes is expected from the National Education Policy 2020 as it starts from the scratch by giving more importance to mental health of a kid, bookless day and involving in other activity would make them have broader idea and help them to showcase their interest which will build up their career later.

Review of Literature

1. Need for Bridging: The Industry – Academic Gap by Prof. SodiJasbirKaur, from the journal *IJEDRI* bearing *704202 ISBN*, published in the *volume 5* in the year *2017*. The author in his study has given a reformation of the system and has conducted his study by preparing three Questionnaires which includes for Students, Universities and Corporates respectively. From his study the author has concluded that Guest Lecturers represented from Industry, Joint Seminars for faculty and students, Public private partnership, Research collaboration, Certification system are some of the ways to bridge the gap.

2. Bridging the Qualification Gap between Academia and Industry in India by Prof. Lennart published in *Dec 2017*, the author has presented a approach to bridge the gap through Learning Factories, found that Technical and Social Competency match the requirements of the industry but there exists a gap regarding the methodological competency.

3. Bridging the Gap between Academia and Industry by Prof. Shalini Gupta has conducted the study with an objective to know the reasons for the gap between industry and institutions and the measures to be taken to reduce this gap. The author has covered the cause and effects of gaps, suggested remedies and actions like planning strategies, curriculum design, systematic thinking, inviting experts, live projects demonstration, internships are some of the remedies given in the study.

4. A Study on the Perceived Gap Between Industry and Academia in Pharmaceutical Sciences in India by GouriPalsokarin his study *Dated 10-01-2018, Volume 52, Issue 1*, through his primary study, the author has found that instead of expanding the horizon of specialisations in PG courses in Pharmaceutical Science, students should be imparted with in depth knowledge on core subjects and fundamental concepts and also should be exposed to latest technological knowhow used in industry, more research, collaboration of industry academia should be taken up for reducing the gap.

5. Bridging the Industry – Academia Skill Gap. A Conceptual Investigation with Special Emphasis on the Management Education in India by Prof.Prachikapil, *Vol 16 Issue 3 of Feb 2014, ISBN 2319-7668* has made recommendations on improving Accreditation and Governance rules in academic Institutions, building centre of excellence and expertise, effective Industry involvement, attractive State of Art teaching faculty and a separate regulatory body exclusively for management schools must be created to regulate, monitor and ensure quality and assurance in delivery of education.

Objectives

1. To know the success rate of National Education Policy 2020.
2. To analyse the obstacles in narrowing the gap between 2 ends.
3. To study the gap between expectation from industrial end and actual reality from university end.

Research Methodology

1. Primary data

   The study was conducted by circulating two sets of questionnaire, one for corporate companies and the other for students pursuing and passed out Post Graduation after 2018. A sample size of 50 was collected from industries and 30 from students, accordingly the findings are based on the collected data.

2. Secondary data

   Apart from primary data, sources like newspaper, vlogs, and articles were referred to collect the data on the study.

Analysis

This part has two segments, namely Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2

Questionnaire 1	Target group Corporate Companies
Questionnaire 2	Target group Students

Questionnaire 1

Sl No	Questions	Analysis
1.	On what rating would you agree, if students are capable enough to fit industry requirement after Post Graduation	1 – 0, 2 – 9, 3 – 22, 4 – 19, 5 – 0 The ratings here highlights that 22% of industrialist feel it is 50:50 and 19% of industrialist feel students are capable to fit industry requirement to some extent
2.	What changes are to be made in college curriculum to suit the corporate need	Skill based, Practical exposure, Internships, Research activities, Session by Industrial trainers, Active workshops, Modern employment based curriculum, Revision of syllabus, less of theory learning, Certificate Courses on current trends.
3.	What skills are expected before hiring a candidate	Adoptability, better understanding, Solution oriented, knowledge on Excel, Confidence, quick leaners, good communication skills, knowledge on latest technologies, multi-tasking and flexibility
4.	What aspects does academic curriculum lack in	Emphasis only on syllabus oriented, no projects with real time application, lack of practical exposure, current market based education
5.	What changes are to be made in our education system	Hope on NEP, live practical sessions rather than all day theory, importance to research, Including aptitude, personality development of students, improving communication skills
6.	What will be the major challenge in bringing a change in our education system	Making people understand the lesser value of exam marks, upgrading skills of students, high employment in our own state, adopting new technologies, digital approach, recruiting staff with digital knowledge

Table 1: Source: Primary Data

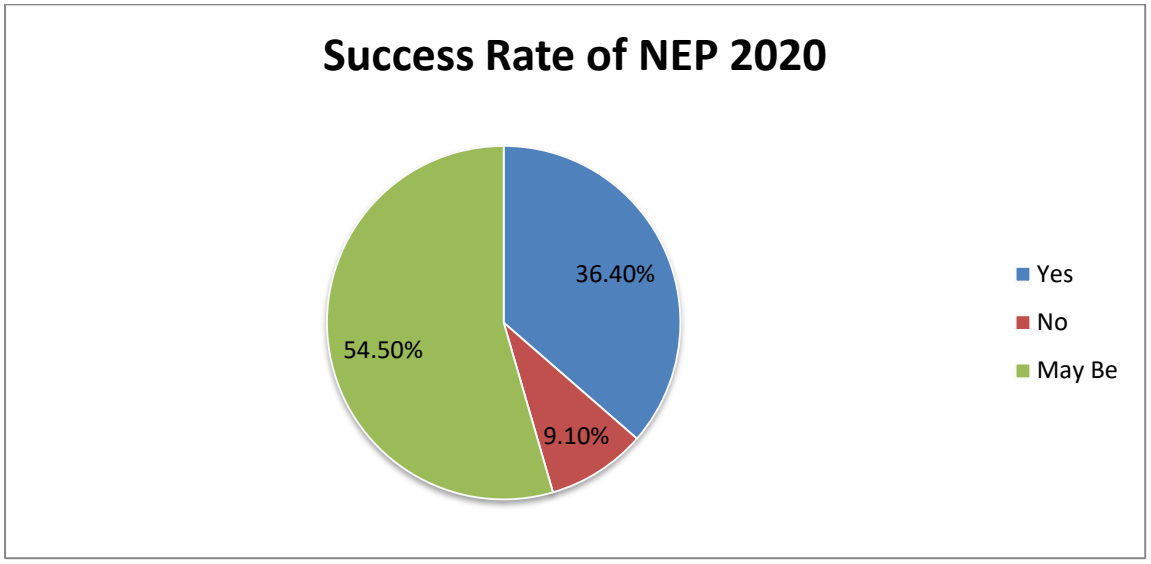

Fig 1: Source: Primary Data

Summary of the Analysis

- The above table depicts the expectation from the industries in hiring a candidate, majority of respondents are M.Com graduates. Presently, they are of the opinion that only 50% of students are capable to fit the industry requirement, while none of the respondent has given highest rating of point 5. More of skill based education system, certificate courses on current trends and other parameters clearly show that industrial participation is equally important in designing the curriculum, delivering workshop and guest lecture.
- The above graph shows the success rate of National Education Policy 2020 which is going to be a welcoming move by the Government of India. Nearly, after 34 years, on 29th July 2020 the cabinet approved the new NEP 2020. This NEP highlights the following aims which will be the requirement of today's industries

1. Bringing the transformation in Indian Education System to meet the needs of 21st Century.
2. To restructure the curriculum and pedagogy.
3. To bring a holistic change in the education system of India.

Questionnaire 2

Sl No	Questions	Analysis
1.	Which certificate courses are offered in your institution at PG level	SAP, GST, Stock market, IT Returns, Foreign language, Tally, Campus to corporate, Excel, digital marketing
2.	Which skill have you improved presently at PG level	Ability to handle pressure, communication skills, English speaking skills, presentation skills, time management
3.	What changes do you expect in our education system	Updated faculties with good knowledge on technology, regular internships, more of project works, breaking monotonous classroom teaching, relevant industrial visit, equal education to all, up gradation on syllabus, less of text book learning, internships not for marks but for experience, gurukul system with technology

Table 2: Source: Primary Data

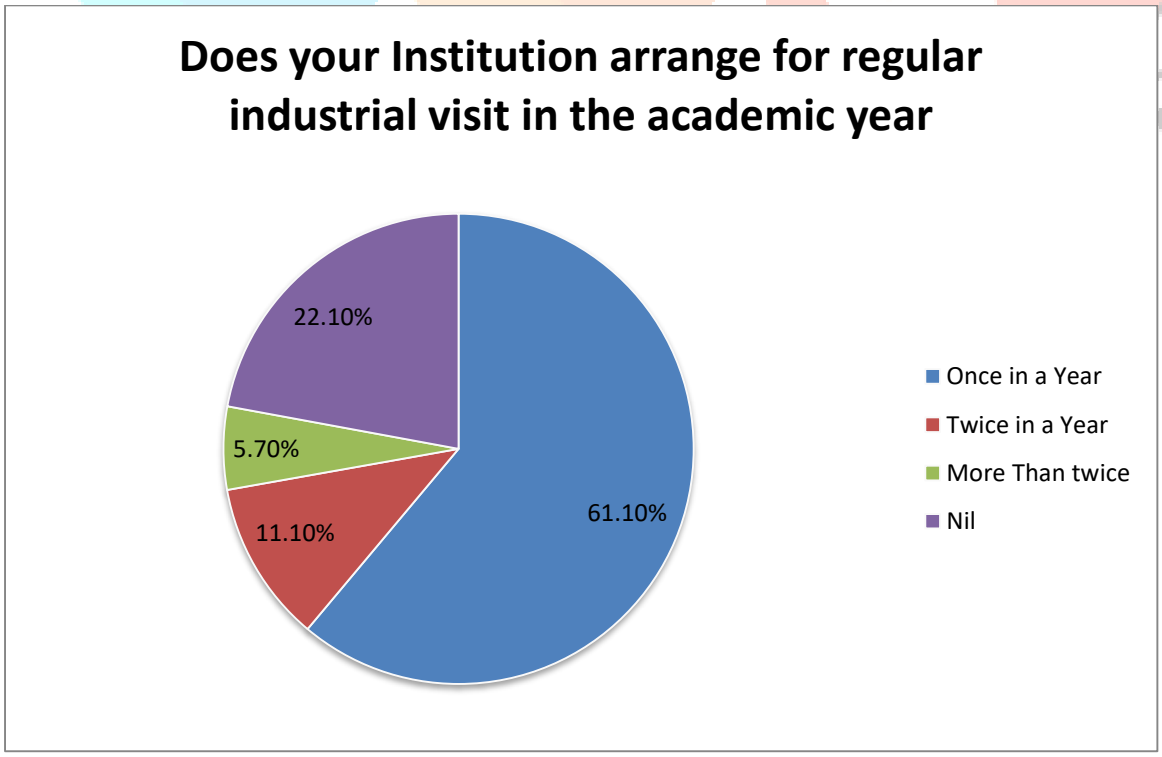

Fig 2: Source: Primary Data

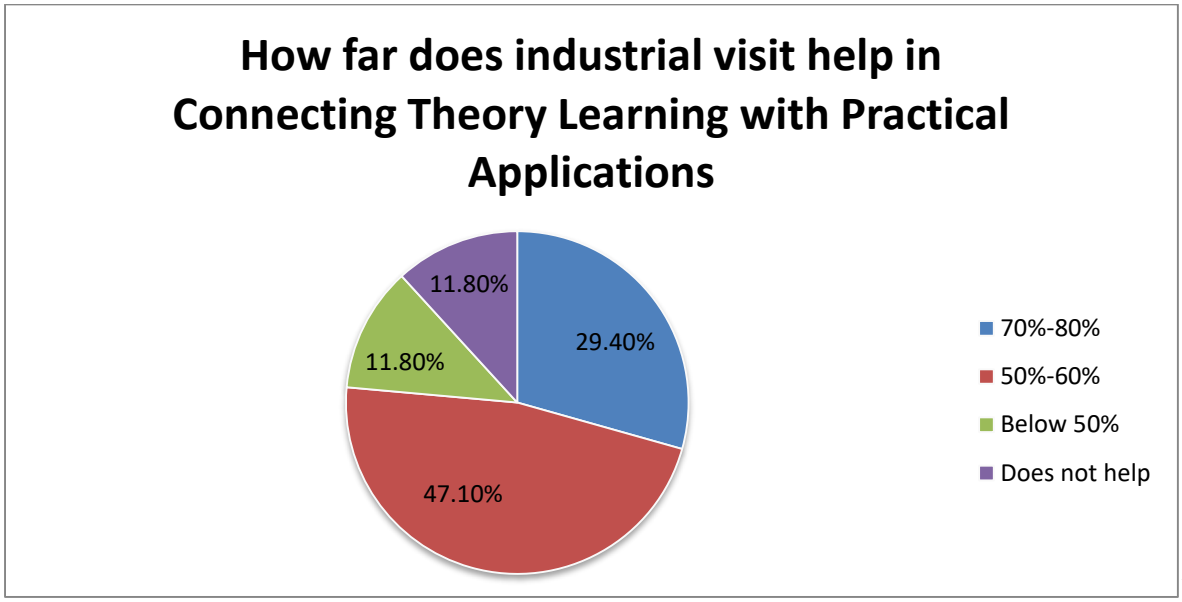

Fig 3:

Source: Primary Data

Summary of Analysis

As per the study conducted, majority of the respondents were from the age group of 23-27, and the highest qualifications of the respondents were M.Com. Therefore the findings are concluded on the basis of Commerce stream. 72% of respondents do agree they have mandatory internship at the institution. Similarly according to Fig 2, 61% of respondents agree there is industrial visit at least once in a year, but as per Fig 3, connecting theory with practical applications help only 50-60% and for 11.1% respondents, industrial visit does not help in connecting theory with practical applications. From the above Table 2, it is evident that institutions do offer various certificate courses in par with the present needs. At PG level students also enhance personal development skills. Furthermore, respondents expect updated faculties on the usage of technology, more number of internships, relevant industrial visits, project reports with standard benchmark, up gradation of syllabus from our education system.

Suggestions

1. Curriculums of universities are not as per the industry standards, courses offered are out-dated, and more of theory based learning is encouraged than application based approach. If theory and practical learning is given equal importance, then class room learning would be an interesting part.
2. Internships should not be done for the sake of documentary work; rather it should be an experience to get to know the live projects.
3. Faculties, who play a vital role in inspiring the students, should poses industrial experience to enable the students to understand the practical way of doing things in corporates. Further, the staff should also be given training regularly by visiting industries to get updated with the latest trends.
4. In universities, grades and marks decide the students' performance, but in industry, evaluation of a candidate is purely on performance of handling a project and how he/she overcomes it.

5. Industry academic collaboration is a must for the universities to keep themselves updated with the present needs and requirements for the betterment of student's future.
6. Mind-set of students that a degree is sufficient to get them job has to be changed at the entry level itself.
7. Making students compulsorily to be a part of various cells like NSS, AICUF, and CSI would make them come out of stage fear and motivate them to grow professionally.
8. Alumni association plays a big role, having regular alumni meet would help students to develop current need.

Conclusion

Comparatively, time has changed now and many institutions are coming up with good courses and project works to help students get prepared with the present needs, especially at PG level students learn multitasking by handling project works, internships and week end courses. The efforts taken by universities need to be in par with requirements of industries for which, involvement of industries in designing the curriculum and being a active participant in major decision would make students future a better one.

Finally I would like to quote a saying given by Mona Bharadwaj "The Future Belongs to Those Who Prepare for It Today" and the preparation has to start from the entry level.

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