



Sadhana Educational & Empowerment Foundation's (SEEF)
**Sadhana Centre for Management & Leadership Development
(SCMLD)**

Seminar: “Learning from the Leaders” - Series XVII

Theme: “Employability vs Work-Ability Vs Performance Delivery at Work

- the challenges of HRD - Macro & Micro”

Venue: Queen Mary's Technical Institute, Pune | Date: 11th & 12th August, 2012

CONCEPT NOTE

Dear Sir / Madam,

A few years ago the terms employment and unemployment were the concerns of all. In recent years when the economy was growing, the issue was of employability. Now it is more acute. But even today for students in general, employment is the concern and not employability. For them and also for a majority of educational institutes and parents – getting admitted in a college and going there every day is education. Efforts for passing exams come towards the end of the term. Otherwise, passing time is the pastime being in a college, and not learning. But they aspire to gain a dream employment with the highest possible salary. For them employment is an appointment with good salary, perks, comforts, leave, leisure, status and so on and not work and delivering work. Simply put, good money, satisfaction according to their likes, wishes and desires, employer brand for own brand building, jumping from one company to another based on the money offered and brand of the new employer etc. is career growth in their lexicon. Nothing is wrong. But work-ready HR is a concern. Those who have no opportunity to jump remain cribbing and grumbling when it comes to WORK but expect and demand all privileges.

For employers, during selection, the rudimentary knowledge, attitude, aptitude, communication skills etc. gauged in a few minutes by talking or in a little longer process using standardized tools are employability factors. Accordingly offers are made. However, work situations are non-standardized. Once employed so, very few deliver at work as expected taking initiative. Not to mention of performance excellence, which is a far cry. Many don't stay with the company for even two years. There is a cost involved here. Those who stay keep whining about, except a few loyal ones.

Therefore, our interpretation of employability is that of the ability and will to put in 100% of what one is borne with and has acquired - talent, aptitude, attitude, skills, passion, knowledge etc. at / in work and deliver performance. That is, the ability to deliver work as required is employability. Not mere knowledge and soft skills. Since it has different perceptions vis-à-vis the

real ability to work and putting that ability at work passionately and purposefully to deliver performance, the terms employability, work-ability and performance are to be separately understood in the right perspective by all concerned rather than using the term interchangeably and in generic form and meaning, for HRD efforts to be effective at macro and micro levels. If not, the efforts towards developing resourceful HR will be wasteful. Hence, this seminar. Standard HRD approaches borrowed from west / prescribed by universities / policy makers have failed to build work-ready HR for the country and employment for the so called educated although business and industry are starved of performing work force (real Human resource – Resourceful Human Beings). Naturally, work-ability and delivering it as performance for the organization, as a servant of the organizational objectives and purpose have an element of “ownership” - be it a technician, trainee, supervisor, manager or a member of the top management. It is also a function of one’s values, principles, loyalty, gratitude and so on combined with skill set & knowledge. Hence our theme – Employability vs Work-Ability vs Performance Delivery at Work. One employing all the talents, ability and skills one has, in/at WORK is employment for us. Employment is engagement for WORK. Not appointment letters. Quality of Work and behaviours at work places build or destroy organizations, community and the country.

The term “employment” as understood today with its appurtenant behaviours’, in fact, is affecting the economic activities adversely now. People should be made and willing to WORK. Populism will not work / yield results. Building such workforce with enlightened awareness, relevant knowledge – functional & technical, skills to deliver that knowledge as work outputs with a sense of ownership & dedication being a responsible partner in fulfilling the commitment the employer has towards its customers/consumers, is the collective responsibility of educators, educationists, policy makers, business organizations, professionals and entrepreneurs. For employers, it cannot be profits only for investors. Every one partnering the process must profit from the business endeavour, including employees, government and the countrymen. Hence it has macro and micro challenges in developing such Human Resource for the country. Turning out paper qualified so called educated youth who are neither willing to nor capable of delivering WORK putting all they have, in it and keep learning continually by doing and enhancing their capabilities, cannot be termed as employability building education. Economic development demands lot of WORK to be done and delivered. Therefore, to avoid confusion we must use the word “work-ability” in place of “employability” when it comes to education and HRD. Work-Ability building includes attitudinal shift and discipline & habits inculcation as well. However formal systemic changes are not going to happen easily or in the near future. Therefore, citizen, corporate and entrepreneurs’ initiatives are the need today. This note may appear to be utopian. But making utopia work is leadership as we view it. That is what SCMLD is attempting.

In this context you may like to address the students for them to be more enlightened, inspired and clear that whatever may be the systemic problems, if one wants to, one can become work-abled not by passing time on campus doing masti but by being passionate and serious at studies picking up relevant knowledge, skills and healthy habits & right attitudes, to emerge work ready and not to be exam centric alone. Faculty must introspect and accept the fact that reading books and having PPT shows are not the method to make students work ready. Educationists must invest in work ready man-making educational Endeavour's. Policy makers must facilitate it. At least should not obstruct such efforts. Business and industry must patronize such initiatives & innovations partnering in such efforts.

We suggest that you share your story and the learning - successes, failures, feelings, the price you had to pay in terms of efforts, facing systemic hurdles, frustrations, people behaviours, perceptions, financing & marketing issues etc. so that the students & faculty realize that success and accomplishments have risks, sacrifices, losses & gains and most importantly the tenacity of purpose, conviction, hard work, feeling of aloneness when crucial decisions are to be taken and nothing is free including freedom and growth , as you feel pertinent. If time permits you may like to go through the enclosed material which may be of some value to articulate further on the theme. We cherish listening to your views and wisdom. Theoretical prescriptions may better be avoided.

Thanking you once again,

Yours sincerely,

M.S. Pillai

Founder Director, SCMLD