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Academic Awards for Workplace Learning

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Abstract:

Workplace learning is acquiring knowledge and skill at the place of work that may be achieved by learning formally or informally from the coworkers or special initiatives like coaching, mentoring, training, workshops organized by the organizations. Various training such as induction, content updating etc are organized by the employers to add value in the work force. Workplace learning is conventionally viewed as a mean to improve knowledge, skill and attitude of the employee. According to (Collin, Sintonnen, Paloniemi, & Auvinen, July 2011)learning in the workplace is achieved by conventional work system. The knowledge is created at the workplace through learning and development. (Avis, 2010) //

Yashwantrao Chavan Maharshatra Open University, Nashik (India), one of the mega Universities, has been practicing various educational experiences to achieve excellence through inclusive and sustainable education. A curriculum designed as per the need of the industry to develop required manpower through continuous workplace learning supported by regular teaching learning sessions and practical experience has a blend of academic as well as learn and earn process and has been successfully implemented by YCMOU in some industries. A complete undergraduate programme has been designed by YCMOU in collaboration with industries to award degree to the incumbent employees after successful completion. Continuous evaluation and term end examinations are conducted by University in the industry. The companies select higher secondary school passed candidates from villages for the programme, provide them employment and conduct teaching, online counseling along with learning material. After graduation these students are placed to higher position or seek employment in similar industry. This is a blended, inclusive, sustainable, workplace educational experience. er. This paper discusses workplace blended learning scenario and such various innovative programmes being offered at YCMOU.// Paper ID 216

Keywords: Non formal learning, Workplace learning, lifelong learning, Inclusive education, sustainable learning.

Introduction

The education can be classified as formal, non formal, informal education based on place, structure, conditions and application of learning inputs.

Formal education is hierarchically structured, classroom and laboratory based usually adopted in various countries with certification at prescribed levels. Formal education includes primary, secondary, higher secondary, graduation, post graduation and doctorate levels with certifications at each level. The formal education is generally full time, bound by standard curricula, institutions and the state regulations. Formal education is the conventional teaching learning system adopted generally.

Non formal education takes place out side above scenario which specially planned to achieve learning outcomes. Non formal education is need based plan to provide required knowledge, skills and attitude to the learner with or without certification.

Informal education is unorganized, not structured, without rules and regulations. It is the learning from family, co-workers or by experience, practice, without structured support. According to EU Definition (2000) Informal education takes place in not intentionally or organized learning situation to guide to acquire skills and knowledge without prescheduled curricula. Knowledge and skills acquired by children from the parents about their family business is informal education.

Government of India has initiated Skill development plan to meet the target of 104 million persons in workforce and 298 million to upgrade skills by 2022. As it is observed that there big gap between industry educational institute linkages reflecting in number of learners who are qualified but lack employability skills. So, there is need for industry-academic interaction through skill oriented programmes to deploy employability skills amongst the learners. Considering the present situation Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) has been implementing some innovative programmes to meet industry needs which could generate employability amongst the learners.

Aims and Objectives:

The aim of this paper is to investigate the non formal education with certification. The objective is to exhibit the case studies of blended workplace learning with specialized curricula and certification for some programmes being practiced at YCMOU Nashik with industry academia linkages.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Formal and Non Formal Education

Formal education involves specific infrastructure and specially trained manpower to impart education. Formal education is structured and covers generalized courses so that output could cater various needs of employment. The output could be absorbed in any industry. Formal Education for artisan to technocrats covers theory and laboratory. In India a structural system from Industrial Training Institutes to Engineering Colleges is adopted. However, it is observed that industry needs could not be fulfilled due to produced manpower is lacking in practical experience. These technical institutes could not revise their curricula frequently as per the recent trends and generalized laboratory experience is not sufficient to fulfill the needs. In some programmes like Industrial Training Institutes, apprenticeship training is mandatory after certification. YCMOU also engages some apprentices who have completed their training in Computer trade. However, in conventional technician and engineering education, on job training is not mandatory that limits the employability. The output from Polytechnic and Engineering Colleges lack field experience and require training after employment in the industry. Medical Education in India includes internship to impart hands on experience. Post Graduates students have to work essentially in hospitals and are engaged in actual work experience during studies. Out put from formal education satisfy the

general needs of society and industry. About 10% to 15 % of the knowledge gained during the formal education is useful in the specific field of work where the candidate get employed.

Non formal education is a planned to fulfill specific needs of society and industry and it is not generalized to cater general needs. Non formal education is more democratic within the reach of every person. There may not be legal certification after completion of Non formal education. There is free movement from work to learning and learning to work. For example: Agricultural programmes run by open universities have proved beneficial to farmers to implements new techniques and skills of farming in their farms and thus learning and work takes place simultaneously. Many industries provide training to new entrants for specified jobs after recruiting them. Many fresh graduates acquire recent skills and expertise through non formal education, though the certification is not formally recognized, and make themselves capable for recruitment. A computer engineering graduate from the university joins a course of 6 months outside for specific expertise and is absorbed immediately in the industry.

Certification in legal framework is essential for government employment and recognition. Formal system of learning is adopted generally and most of the population, bureaucrats, law makers have acquired qualifications through formal system. Non formal system of education is a democratic movement to reach the unreached. Academic Certification through non formal system has always been discriminated as sub standard, ' not eligible for employment' by the established formally educated privileged groups. The students acquiring awards from the non formal system of education have to face many hurdles as their certifications are not accepted for jobs and higher educations unless they move to the court of law. A social awakening is needed to provide status to non formal education.

A blend of Formal and Non Formal Workplace Learning

The output from formal education could not cater the needs of employment fully due to lack of work place experience, on the other hand the non formal education generally does not have certification in legal frame work. Work place learning is the learning that takes place while producing goods and services. More productivity has been witnessed by adopting the approach of learning and skill development within the work place. Work based learning could be effective in general education to develop various skills such as problem solving and learning skills. Vocational and Technical skills could be effectively learned at work place. Workplace learning is organised, structured with learning objectives to achieve knowledge, skills and competencies (Eliason & Rayan).

Workplace learning has many advantages, it improves productivity of enterprises, it is effective type of pedagogy and increases quality of training and vocational education, it improves career growth of an individual, leading to innovations. Workplace learning develops fundamental work habits, work-related distinctiveness, problem solving skills by development of precise work-related competencies to build step by step ((Ainley, 1996) (Resnik, 1987)

The basic principles of experiential learning set out by Dewey (1938) imparts not only work-based learning, but also adult learning, service learning and outdoor education ((Billett, 2001) (Boud, 1985). Workplace learning can also be a method of improvising basic literacy and numeracy by helping students to understand the real-world application of basic skills. Non formal technical and vocational education has proved to be more effective than the formal education. Workplace learning is conventionally viewed as a mean to improve knowledge, skill and attitude of the employee. According to (Collin, Sintonnen, Paloniemi, & Auvinen, July 2011) learning in the workplace is

achieved by conventional work system. The knowledge is created at the workplace through learning and development. (Avis, 2010)

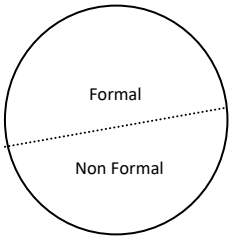

Fig1: A blend of formal and non formal education

Hence, the educational programmes designed, including both formal and non formal components, designed for specific requirements could be more effective.

Innovative Programmes in YCMOU

Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open Universities is one of the mega open universities of the world, has been practicing blended model of formal and non formal education in some programmes.

B. Sc. Agriculture is a five year modular programme with multi point entry and exit with flexibility. One Cerificate and three diploma programmes are awarded during first four years and the candidate becomes eligible for admission to fifth year leading to Degree. This programme has empowered more than 300 thousands students to obtain various jobs and implement skills and techniques of modern farming in their farms. This programmes has compulsory some class room counseling sessions and practical sessions. The students learn and practice acquired knowledge and skills in their farms. In India the medium of instruction for this programme is English all over the country. YCMOU is the only university in the country to offer B. Sc. Agriculture programme in local Marathi language. Learning skill and knowledge in local language has proved beneficial to the farmers to practice those in their farms.

All India Council of Technical Education regulates technical education in India. Technical Education through ODL mode is not allowed in India since last few years. Technician Diploma (Polytechnic) programmes with formal curricula were run by YCMOU in the colleges approved by regulating body. The programme have essential class room counseling as well as laboratory required to be completed by incumbents. The programmes were beneficial for the persons employed to acquire vertical mobility as well as the industry could get higher technical skills. Same programmes were implemented under 'Earn and Learn Scheme' in some industries with formal curriculum. The candidates were selected and employed in the company. A classroom teaching was conducted in the industry and the laboratory in the technical colleges. The laboratory experience the students acquired, could practice while working in the industry. All examinations were conducted and the candidates were assessed as per formal method. This has proved industries to develop skill manpower as per their requirement and provided opportunity to learn to the deprived section.

Workplace Learning and Academic Awards

Keeping in view the formal curricula, the university designed curricula in collaboration with industry for their specific needs. Various programmes are being run successfully for last some years.

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) is an under graduate level programme. The programme has been designed by Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation in collaboration with YCMOU for the students who want to pursue their career in business process management industry. The students of this programme are imparted to real life work environment of service sector industries during their studies. Theses students work in University and other

industries and get remunerations as per specified norms. It is noticed that these students get jobs immediately in service industries after graduation.

Another inclusive undergraduate programme has been designed by YCMOU in collaboration with global pharmaceutical company to award B.Sc. in Industrial Drug Science to cater the need of industry by providing skilled and trained manpower. The object of YCMOU is to provide innovative system of education to benefit the deprived section of the society. The admission to this course is given to HSC (XII) Science pass students from the various sections of the society. The students work in the company and get actual work experience to acquire knowledge and skills of product design lifecycle of pharmaceutical industry. The curriculum includes pharmaceutical courses along with computer and soft skills to inculcate attitude and team work. Continuous evaluation and term end examinations are conducted by University in the industry. After graduation the selected students are absorbed in higher positions as per company norms. This programme gives hands on experience to the candidates improving their employability in pharmaceutical industry.

B. Sc. (Facility Services) is another programme designed with a reputed service industry to provide trained manpower to the increasing need of this industry in the country. The students are admitted to the programme and exposed to actual work and practical experience to handle various machines. Along with work exposure they are taught various courses like soft skills, front office, building maintenance, safety and security etc. The company will upgrade the students to higher positions according to its requirement. This programme will prove beneficial to service industry in the country.

In addition to above programmes some certificates and diploma level programmes are offered by YCMOU at work place.

A Patient Assistant Certificate level programme is offered where the rural and tribal students are admitted to the programme, they are offered stipend and are provided hands on training in hospitals. After completing this programme the students are recruited in various hospitals.

Educational programmes leading to various academic awards from certificate to Degree have been implemented by YCMOU in various industries and organisations to provide inclusive, sustainable, workplace educational experience.

Conclusion

Formal Education in the rigid frame work with class room teaching learning could not satisfy the need of employment due to lack of expertise in the skills demanded by industry. Non formal system of education with specific curriculum and learning at work place could acquire required knowledge and skills for the specific industry.

The huge impact of combining work and learning has evolutionary outcomes like development of the occupational skills. The essential working habits and skills, the linkages with industry and workplace that learners develops helps in developing good career avenues for learners and at the same time industry benefits by saving cost on training.

The workplace learning with industry institute interaction to generate trained and skilled manpower with blend of formal class room education, evaluation and academic awards equivalent to formal system of education will be beneficial to cater the trained manpower requirement of the society and will prove to be more democratic, sustainable inclusive educational system.

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