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# Higher Education and Employability- A Review

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## ABSTRACT:

*Employability is a vital word in consideration on the platform of commerce and industry and higher education especially professional education. It has witnessed skill gaps into the students wish to join industry. Present paper is a review paper in nature attempt to articulate views of researchers on employability skills, employer's perspectives on employability skills, employability skills gap and bridging the skills gap. The paper does not conclude in its own but facilitate more thinking on bridging the skill gap. The paper may also reveal few hypothesis's to researchers wish to work in this area.*

**Keywords:** *Employability, Higher Education, Employability Skill Gap, Employer*

## Introduction:

The concern for employability is growing more day by day with the advancement in educational sector on the magnitude of new reforms. Questions are raised on employability when it comes to quantitative dimensions of education.

Various issues like employability skills, employment related questions, success and failure in work, understanding the skills needed by management qualified employees entering in the workforce and their relation to education and the like, remained in the discussion.

Owing to immense importance of subject, the researchers world over have explored this subject from different perspective. Present article is an effort to present review of such aspects relate with employability. The review is presented in synthesis form of with the help of different categories viz. employability definition, meaning of employability, employability skill, academic perspective, employability skill gap, suggestions on employability skills.

## Employability:

Plethora of definitions found on the concept employability. Scholars and researchers have defined employability from their own perspective.

1. "Employability skills as including personal image, interpersonal skills, and good habits and attitudes." (Lankard; 1990).
2. "Employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment." (Hillage J., 1998).
3. "Employability is the ability of the graduate to get a satisfying job." (Harvey, 2001)
4. "Employability of a graduate is the propensity of the graduate to exhibit attributes that employers anticipate will

be necessary for the future effective functioning of their organisation." (Harvey and Locke 2002).

5. "The relevance of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through training to what the labour market/profession requires" .AEC (2004) (Association europeenne des conservatoires).
6. "A set of achievements - skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy." (Yorke 2004:9)

From above definitions various approaches on employability came afloat. Though the entire definitions are directed towards getting an employment but the way of approach found distinct. In short employability means individuals capability, ability, success, chance, adaptability, and competency to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.

Some of the researcher emphasized on skills and attributes required like Knowledge to select and be employable in that particular area. It also defined as the capacity of an individual to get or hold employment. The concept has been in use for many years and given multiple meanings.

From the definitions it is profoundly found that the definition of employability passes through three phases, one it talks about employability skills, then in second phase it deals with the change process and third it talks about the applications of employability skills to get the job i.e employment.

Hence it is understood that Employability is nothing but individual's capacity to understanding and acquiring personal attributes (knowledge, skills and abilities) to gain employment, satisfying employer as well as sustain there.

## Meaning of Employability:

The Employability is buzz word in the recent days. How to view

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employability? There is no any agreement on this issue till the time. In a general sense, employability means having employed. Employability refers to a person's capability of gaining initial employment maintaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). Employability is the ability of the graduate to get a satisfying job. (Harvey, 2001). Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Pool and Sewell, 2007). On employability there are innumerous studies done by various researcher in past, such studies exploring that how graduated student should enter in the workforce (Harvey, 2001; Knight & Yorke, 2004), there is another dimension of employability that how employed individual competitive and sustain in the workforce. (e.g. Forrier & Sels, 2003a; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Garsten, 2004). A distinct focus on unemployed individual that how to get back on work (Finn, 2000; McArdle, Waters, Briscoe, & Hall, 2007).

From last two decades the concept of employability being highlights further intensely. The concept of employability is ever-changing time to time. This time the concept is introduced with the reason of recognizing those individuals that are able for employment. Today many industries were short of workforce, the employability focus, in addition, is heading for unemployed and those could work in workplace. (e.g. Beveridge, 1909). There is another approach on the concept of employability that employees are looking for those individuals whose health is sound, age between 15 to 64 and do not have any family constraints such as children to take care of (Gazier, 1999). Thus, the first notion of employability has been called "dichotomist," due to its categorization of individuals into either employable or unemployable (Gazier, 2001).

This is a difficult task to understand, recognize, expand, and evaluate employability of an individual. Employability is the ability of an individual to obtain and sustain in a job. It is the capability of an individual to shift in the work force market and understand the potential which is available in him or her. This is a source of revenue through consistent employment.

**Employability Skills:**

"Those basic skills necessary for getting, keeping and doing well on a job". (Robinson 2000:1). "Transferable core skills groups that represent essential, functional and enabling knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the 21st century workplace ... necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education". (Overtoom 2000:2).

Put simply, employability skills are those that apply across a variety of jobs and life contexts, including (but not limited to) paid employment and formal education. They are a set of social skills that we use to facilitate socially situated activities such as work, leisure and learning. They are acquired and developed throughout an individual's career and life and differ quite dramatically from technical or the 'doing' skills both in nature and the way they are developed. They are also known by several other

names, including key skills, core skills, life skills, essential skills, key competencies, necessary skills, and transferable skills. However industry's preferred terms are employability skills.

Two national studies one by , the American Society for Training and Development ASTD (Carnevale, Gainer, and Meltzer 1990) and one by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS 1991) (Bruening, 2000) are introductory works in identifying employability skills, often used as yardsticks or beginning points for other international, national, state, regional, and local studies. ASTD emphasized 16 skill groups across all job families as follows:

**Table 1: American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) Skills.**

Sr.	Group	Skills
1	Basic Competency Skills	Reading, Writing, Computation
2	Communication Skills	Speaking, Listening
3	Adaptability Skills	Problem Solving, Thinking Creatively
4	Developmental Skills	Self-Esteem, Motivation And Goal-Setting, Career Planning
5	Group Effectiveness Skills	Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, Negotiation
6	Influencing Skills	Understanding Organizational Culture, Sharing Leadership

Source: (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1990)

The U.S. Department of Labor, which supported the ASTD study through a grant, then established the SCAN. The commission's task was to investigate not only what is required in the workplace of today and tomorrow, but to determine the extent to which high school students are able to meet the requirements

SCAN has focused on one important aspect of schooling: what they called "learning a living" system. In 1991, they issued their initial report, *What Work Requires of Schools*. As outlined in that report, a high-performance workplace requires workers who have a solid foundation in the basic literacy and computational skills, in the thinking skills necessary to put knowledge to work, and in the personal qualities that make workers dedicated and trustworthy. (O'Neil et al. 1997). The findings highlight 36 skills, including the ability to use five competencies efficiently (resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology) based on a three-part foundation of basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities.

(Coopers and Lybrand 1998), (Moreley 2001) define 'employability skills' in terms of four key areas:

1. Traditional intellectual skills e.g. Critical evaluation, logical argument;
2. Key skills communication, IT, etc.
3. Personal attributes motivation, self-reliance and
4. Knowledge of organizations and how they work.

There are several synonyms to employability skills - core, key, generic, personal, transferable skills, common, work or employment related skills this is another of the reasons why it is difficult to conceptualize what is meant by employability skills. Added to that, 'skills' are often referred to as capabilities, competencies or attributes, levels or learning outcomes, thus compounding the sense of confusion.

Despite its diverse definition, employability skills have to be greatly emphasized. Employability skills refer to such cognitive abilities as learning to learn, analytic and problem solving, innovative, and communication skill (Bikson, 1994; Bikson & Law, 1995; Stasz, McArthur, Lewis & Ramsey, 1990).

The concept of employability skills can sometimes be referred to as basic skills or the career and employability skills (C&ES), and sometimes be considered as the workplace basics or workplace know-how skills (Hollenbeck, 1994).

Graduates across Europe and the UK found that UK graduates rated teamwork, working under pressure, oral communication skills and problem solving in the top ten skills competencies they viewed as important. In contrast, none of these appeared in the list of proficiencies rated highly by European graduates, instead they highlighted learning abilities, working independently and written communication skills.(Brennan *et al.* 1996)

Overall, employers are less demanding of technical skills, considering them trainable, if candidates exhibit employability and soft skills, and positive attributes (Winterbotham *et al.*, 2001). For some employers, the degree subject studied is not as important as the graduates' ability to handle complex information and communicate it effectively (Knight & Yorke, 2002). The evidence demonstrates that employers continue to face recruitment difficulties. One-fifth reported vacancies that could not be filled due to a lack of applicants with the necessary skills, however, employers may not place an emphasis on developing the skills they need 'in-house' Learning +Skill Council (LSC, 2003).

Employers' skills requirements vary by region, sector and occupation. Indeed, the definition and understanding of the term skills can be complex with overlaps between skills, qualifications and characteristics. (LSC, *ibid*; Bunt, 2005)

The discussion of employability skills reveals that for getting employment individual must have or must possess employability skills and these skills requirement can be vary from organization to organization because of region, sector and occupation. Various researcher identified, categories these employability skills in different groups and studies the importance and competency of the same and they found that Employers cannot place an importance on developing the skills they need 'in-house' and are fewer demanding of technological skills, considering them trainable

### Employers Perspectives

Innumerable studies have evaluated exactly what employers are looking for in their new employees. The assessment of employer satisfaction in employee preparedness after graduating from

institutions of higher education is important. This can assist in providing tangible evidence of the quality of education that students are receiving and its relevance to the workforce. What are the skills that are most desired by employers? Are these the same skills that are being taught in academic classrooms? (Phillipi and Banta 1994) Communication and interpersonal relations; teamwork and problem-solving; and managing resources are key elements of employability skills.( Zinser 2003) Leadership skills, Communication skills and Conflict management skills are some of the employability skills desired by employers.(Robinson 2006) and (Robinson and Garton 2007)

The National Association of College and Employers (NACE) is a professional association that connects college career services to potential employers. NACE has compiled a list of the top 20 skills requested by employers (2007). These skills in rank order are as follows:

Rank	Skills	Rank	Skills
1	Analytical Skills	11	Leadership And Management Skills
2	Communication Skills	12	Motivation/Initiative
3	Computer Skills	13	Organizational And Time Management Skills
4	Creativity	14	Real Life Experiences
5	Detail-Oriented	15	Self-Confidence
6	Risk-Taker	16	Strong Work Ethic
7	Flexibility/Adaptability	17	Tactfulness
8	Friendly	18	Teamwork Skills
9	Honesty/Integrity	19	Technical Skills
10	Interpersonal Skills	20	Well-Mannered/Polite

(Source NACE 2007)

These skills are considered to be important for potential employees to possess and apply to their job.

If every student emerges with the same range of employability skills, any market advantage would disappear. Indeed, Atkins advocates a change of emphasis, where employability skills are left out of the curriculum altogether and are addressed after graduation when graduates are either looking for work or are in transition to their first jobs. However, this will be too late for many students who are involved in the 'Milkround' - many employers are looking for students in the summer vacation prior to graduation, and these students need to be in a position to present them effectively. Since the development of skills and attributes requires practice over a long time frame, it would seem impossible to leave the development of these until after graduation (Atkins 1999).

Research has shown that pre-interview application materials strongly influence employers' perceptions of the job interview, and ultimately, hiring decisions (Howard & Ferris, 1996; Macan & Dipboye, 1994; Macan & Hayes, 1995; Marchioro & Bartels, 1994). Employers evaluate job applicants' employment-related traits, such as motivation, performance, reliability, and effectiveness, in making their hiring decisions (Christman &

Slaten, 1991; Moriarity, Walls, & McLaughlin, 1988). Considered together, these traits indicate the job applicant's perceived level of employability.

For a number of years there have been concerns raised by employers about the quality and adequacy of graduates in relation to their ability to fulfill the requirements of the posts they take up after graduation (Knight and York, 2002; Miller Smith, 2002; Hills *et al*, 2003; Little *et al*, 2003; Lesslie, 2004). These concerns have been addressed in some companies by the provision of training courses in which graduates are brought 'up to speed' in specific areas required in their employment., for example, AstraZeneca has an extensive training course for new graduates which runs over one year and covers a variety of topics (Higher Education Academy Centre for Bioscience, 2003). Such courses take time and resource and smaller employers may find them difficult and uneconomic to put on, hence the desire for an 'oven ready and self-basting' graduate (Atkins, 1999)

Employers sought tangible skills such as taking initiative, listening, problem-solving, and being flexible and open to change. However, leadership educators emphasized teambuilding, knowledge of self, and understanding leadership styles in their courses. Agreement was reached on the importance and teaching of decision-making skills and accountability for one's actions. These findings further reveal that there are differences between skills and behaviors being taught and learned in higher education classrooms and those skills and behaviors being sought by potential employers (Badal, 2000).

Employers want to hire employees who are capable leaders and can motivate their co-workers in the process (Coplin 2003). Further support to this notion stating that employers want employees who are deemed as self-starters and value being empowered in the workplace. (Brungardt and Gould 2001).

"Many feel that there is a skills gap between the manner in which students are prepared for the real world in a university setting and what they will need to be successful in the workplace and for life in general" (Shivpuri and Kim 2004). This skills gap discussion shifts the focus from workplace preparation to the responsibility of higher education (Cox & King, 2006). Employers want to hire students that are ready for the workplace. This apparent "skills gap" serves as a call to universities to consider incorporating leadership into programs to close the gap.

From the employer point of view skills most desirable are communication, interpersonal relations, teamwork, problem-solving, managing resources, leadership skills, communication skills, conflict management, taking initiative, listening, problem-solving, flexible, open to change, teambuilding, knowledge of self, and understanding leadership styles.

A new Europe-wide survey among employers shows that, when it comes to graduate recruitment, 'soft' skills are just as valued as sector-specific and computer skills. Significant numbers of employers questioned said that the ability to work well in a team (98%), to adapt to new situations (97%), communication skills (96%), and knowledge of foreign languages (67%) were important when recruiting for their companies. Almost 50% of

companies with considerable international business identified knowledge of foreign languages as the most important skill for the future.

Employers were first and foremost looking for young people coming into the workforce to be educated, numerate and able to communicate well. They also considered attitude important, and were seeking staff that would arrive promptly, show commitment and bring keenness to their jobs. During their first five years of employment, employers said they were prepared to invest in people to help them develop more refined work-related skills. But very few appeared to be prepared to give a young candidate an entry-level job unless they had the basic skills outlined above. The research seemed to suggest that a lack of communication, literacy and numeracy is a significant barrier to young people entering the workforce. It also suggested that employers regarded it as the responsibility of the state to fund and develop the basic skills required for employment. However employers were prepared to fund activity to help people develop the work-related and professional skills needed for their businesses. They also strongly held the view that the acquisition of employability skills should be seen as a continuum of learning that supports job progression, not just entry into the workforce. (LSN 2008)

Employability is a critical issue for both government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). With the expansion in HE and recent economic downturn, there is intense competition for jobs in the graduate employment market. The Summer Graduate Recruitment indicated that on average there were 48 applications per graduate vacancy. (Association of Graduate Recruiters, 2009)

One of the key reasons why many students invest in university education is to improve their employment prospects. However, whilst achievement of good academic qualifications is highly valued, it no longer appears sufficient to secure employment (Yorke, 2006). Additionally, employers expect students to have well developed employability skills, so that they can make an immediate contribution to the workplace when recruited (*e.g.* Confederation of British Industry, 2008). Thus, whilst some employers screen job applications on the basis of degree classification, such achievements are much less important at the short-listing stage. In some cases employers initially use criteria other than the honours degree to assess applications; often requiring applicants to undertake a series of skills activities and psychometric tests, and to produce a personality profile (Graduate Prospects, 2009). Some employers adopt such practices for purposes of ensuring equal opportunities, of widening access and of recognising a more diverse group of potential employees. It is believed that graduates with good employability skills may otherwise be missed because they have not attained good academic qualifications (Denholm, 2004; Morley *et al.*, 2006; Morley and Aynsley, 2007). Furthermore, it is increasingly recognised that the honours degree classification system may not be reliable (Yorke, 2007) and there has been concern about grade inflation (Baty, 2007). The different regulations and practices pertaining to degree outcomes in different universities could undermine the fairness and

comparability of the classification system across different institutions (Lowe, 2007; Yorke *et al.*, 2007). However, the external examiner system should help to safeguard standards (e.g. Jackson, 2005; Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006), although this has been questioned (House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee Report, 2009).

The current trend of placing increased emphasis on graduate/key skills therefore dictates that the HE curriculum incorporates opportunities to develop such skills in conjunction with subject-specific skills and knowledge. This should enhance applicants' potential for success in the recruitment process by producing 'business ready' graduates, able to make a dynamic start and rapidly adapt to change. To this end, different academic programmes in different universities are adopting various strategies by, for example, offering work experience, work-related learning and employability skills modules, and 'ready for work' events, as well as involving employers in course design and delivery. In many cases, with employability skills already embedded in the curriculum, universities employ a range of initiatives to make them more explicit to students (Cranmer, 2006).

Various surveys have been conducted (e.g. Archer and Davison, 2008; Bunt *et al.*, 2005; Canny, 2004; National Employers Skills Survey 2007; Stephens and Hamblin, 2006) to identify the desired skills required for graduate employment and considerable agreement has been found amongst different employers (irrespective of the nature of the employment) on the skills valued most. However, it is important to ascertain whether students have similar views to employers. Accordingly, study focused on the perceptions not only of employers, but also of undergraduate sandwich students and of graduates, in order to recognize opportunities in the curriculum for developing and enhancing student employability skills. Moreover, the employers selected here had specific links with institution and Bachelor in Management Leadership (BML) programmes.

A national level committee, comprising members from educational and industrial sectors be formed to match the demands and needs required by the labour market with the educational portfolio. This must be implemented by regular analysis, skill level determination, revision of the curriculums and finally to follow up and control, on the basis of individual specialization. This model may reduce the expenses of pre-employment training, which financially overburden the industrial sector & increases the proficiency level of graduates, leading to trust in the educational sector and enhance the economic growth. (Hamatteh and Jufout 2003)

Institutions must be responsive to demographic shifts that have occurred in higher education by engaging in ongoing strategic planning similar to that which is done in the business world. (Burell & Grizzell 2008). Academia conventionally has followed business in its grasp of trends. It must be and remain aware of trends-not fads-in business so that it continues to be relevant in its "production" of graduates who will be seeking

employment after finishing their degrees & leaving the institution. (Montgomery and Porter 1991) (McCroskey 2008) developed Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) that resulted in a framework of five leadership practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

To keep pace with global competition, fresh graduates need to adapt to the new business environment and workplace demands. The key element to enable graduates to keep up with those demands seems to be the employability skills and traits that are imparted during tertiary education. It has also become a common belief in industry that higher education institutions should equip graduates with the proper skills necessary to achieve success in the workplace (Robinson, 2008).

The employability skills should not be taught since students acquire them on their own during training and education. Their research findings also reveal that production technology and Industrial Electronics students from a technical training institute in Malaysia have acquired slightly high degree of employability skills during their education and training program. Students in this institute are equipped with the skills needed for current workplace environment, especially in industrial sectors that focus more on technical and employability skills (Ab. Rahim & Ivan 2007).

Most employers require at least a high school diploma, and they are equally concerned about whether young people can get along with others on the job, are reliable, and can present themselves well to the public. The development of good employability skills should begin at home and often is the result of effective parenting. However, the development of such skills cannot be relied solely on parents and home.

The majority of respondents (97.9%) from the research opined that all the personal qualities like willingness to learn new things, dedicated and committed, possess self-confidence, pleasant personality and approachable, have the drive to achieve results, resourceful and able to take initiatives, responsible, reliable and trustworthy, able to adjust and adapt to change, able to work independently, able to withstand pressure and uncertainty, able to self-evaluate own performance, obedient and compliant, knowledgeable and skillful, open-minded, helpful and possess ethnic and gender sensitivity are 'important' or 'very important'. There were low percentages for 'somewhat important' and 'not important' ie. 1.7 % of the employers said that the willingness to learn new things and 0.4% said that it was 'not important' to their firm. From the findings, one can learn that these respondents were reluctant to explore more and be pro-active to further expose themselves to new technology and anything that will affect their performance for the benefit of themselves and the organization as a whole (Munir, Aniswal & Haslinda 2005).

Above study reveals that for an employability, various skills are required e.g. Communication and interpersonal relations; teamwork and problem-solving, managing resources, Leadership skills, Conflict management skills, from the various studies across the globe concluded that employability skills

should not be taught since students acquire them on their own during training and education. Employability Skills are coachable in the institute.

### **Employability Skills Gap**

The employability skill scarcity has its origins in the education system. Because of high rate of drop-out at primary and secondary school level and deprived admission levels in higher education lead to a thin educated workforce. The poor infrastructure which institutes and universities provide leads for further challenges before employability. In Indian institutes and universities standards also detracted, more than 60% of institutes and 90% of universities in India are of poor standard. Therefore, the quality and employability of aspirants is low, making them less employable. Because of the out-dated syllabus, less interaction between industry and institutes resulting wide gap in academia, industry and students employability. Further, there are differences in Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes based on the MBA institute the recently hired MBAs graduated from 80 % of those surveyed felt it made a difference, where only 8 % felt it did not, and 12 % were unsure. Understanding why this is the case helps us better Understand gaps reported in many of the specific attributes highlighted earlier. With over 2,000 Institutions offering MBAs in India today, many respondents felt that “the difference is night and day”, with too much disparity between schools. The Skills Gap do exist, particularly in Skills such as listening, and team work and collaboration; Attitudes such as self-motivation, self-discipline, and commitment and dedication; and Knowledge such as understanding organisation and process; product, solutions, and services; and consumer behaviour. (Higher Education Forum supported by ISOS & Westat, 2010).

More than 80 per cent of the students do not meet the requirements on the problem solving skills. The average score of Andhra Pradesh students was less than 25 per cent against national average of 35 per cent. “There are more than 50 per cent of the students who have scored less than 25 per cent in problem solving, making them fall in the 'hard-to-train' segment,” the study revealed. Lack of these skills was forcing students to settle for non-technical jobs after engineering education. When it came to communication skills of engineering students, 80 per cent of them did not meet the qualifying criteria. However, most of out of the 20 per cent who are fine with communication skills cannot be hired because of either lack of problem solving skills or technical skills. Proficiency in communication skills is considered more of a 'qualifying criteria' than selection criteria for technical roles in the industry. More than 60 per cent of the students do not meet the employability criteria on technical skills for the IT industry. The study also revealed that 11 per cent of the students are employable when organisations do not consider technical skills as a criterion. Even the students who do meet the technical skills criteria are still not 'ready-to-deploy' in the companies and have to undergo 3 to 4 months on technical training. The survey also found that about 25 per cent of students, which currently fall in the 30-40 per cent performance band, can be trained to upgrade their skills to employable (Purple Leap, 2009).

A major skill gap exists among Indian engineering graduates, making a strong case for the engineering colleges and institutions to focus more on employability and quality, 64 percent of surveyed employers are “somewhat”, “not very”, or “not at all” satisfied with the quality of engineering graduates' skills. The top three most important general skills identified were integrity, reliability and teamwork, while the top three most important specific skills are entrepreneurship, communication in English and use of modern tools and technologies. The employers are relatively satisfied with the graduates when it comes to communication skills in English, but not with the graduates' reliability, (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the World Bank. July 2007).

Owing to poor employability skills, India's IT sector will face a shortfall of half a million professionals by 2010 while a recent IDC report suggests India will experience a shortfall of 118,000 skilled IT networking professionals in 2008 alone in a country of so much opportunity (NASSCOM, 2008).

Nowadays, most employers prefer to hire graduates from open universities since they are supposed to have the essential academic qualifications and employability skills which are important in the current job environment. Generally employers who have the experience of hiring graduates from an open university are satisfied and contented with their graduates (Gurvinder Kaur & Sharan Kaur, 2008).

A national level committee, comprising members from educational and industrial sectors be formed to match the demands and needs required by the labour market with the educational portfolio. This must be implemented by regular analysis, skill level determination, revision of the curriculums and finally to follow up and control, on the basis of individual specialization. This model may reduce the expenses of pre-employment training, which financially overburden the industrial sector & increases the proficiency level of graduates, leading to trust in the educational sector and enhance the economic growth (Abu Hamatneh, 2003).

An academia traditionally has trailed business in its grasp of trends. It must be and remain aware of trends-not fads-in business so that it continues to be relevant in its "production" of graduates who will be seeking employment after finishing their degrees & leaving the institution (Montgomery and Porter 1991).

(McCroskey, 2008) developed Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) that resulted in a framework of five leadership practices: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart.

At present, there are several mechanisms operational in India, with 'Academia-Industry interaction,' as a fulcrum of technical education. By involving the industries right from the stage of conscripting syllabi to absorbing the trained students, they are allowed to shape the core into a highly productive Human Resource Centre. This also enables them to reduce the time required to orient a fresh graduate before she/he could be inducted into shop floor and to upgrade/ re-skill their existing employees at a very competitive cost (Ghosh Debabrata, 2007).

The higher education and industry linkages should remain alive for constant updating of courses. By creating the partnership between universities and industry, both can benefit from resources of each other (Zahid 2008).

Faculty-student ratio should be close to 1:10, frequent revision of syllabus in consultation with the industry and institutions should create the professionals with global mind set so that they can adjust in different cultural & social settings (Hannan 2003).

From above various studies it has been seen that there is skill gap between industry and students, Industry and Institute as well. Institute has to respond to the requirement of industry and has to change as per the need. There is suggestion that before employment there must be pre-employment training to the students. There is one more suggestion that involvement of industry in development of syllabus and partnership between Universities and Industry. Hence it is pivoted to find out the impact of syllabus on skills development, impact of entire course on skills development, whether skills imparted by the institution are acceptable by the industry.

#### **Suggestions on Employability Skills:**

Employability skills are coachable skills and may be trained in both schools and employment settings. Therefore, the authority should set aims and objectives for teaching employability skills and instructions should be designed to ensure goals and objectives are attainable. (Robinson 2000).

Faculty-student ratio should be close to 1:10, frequent revision of syllabus in consultation with the industry and institutions should create the professionals with global mind set so that they can adjust in different cultural & social settings (Hannan 2003).

Ensure common platform for industry and education institutions to work out value-based curriculum taking into consideration the needs of industry (Patel and Popker 1998). The time has also come for business schools to develop codes of conduct for MBAs and to withdraw the degrees of those who break the manager's code (Podonly 2009). There is a great deal of conflict between what is being taught to the students and what they are going to do when they move outside (SIEMEMSMA 1998). How can we expect the most poorly equipped teacher to deal with the most challenging of situations? (Ramachandran et al June 2009).

The perception gap between industry and faculty must be bridged to improve the employability of students and enhance the quality of higher education. Industry leaders presume that only 15% of people coming out of Indian colleges are employable. To counter the situation, the institutions must be responsive to demographic shifts that have occurred in higher education by engaging in ongoing strategic planning similar to that which is done in the business world (Burell & Grizzell 2008). The historically, colleges and universities have been extremely slow in adapting to social change (Smith and Tamer 1984).

At present, there are several mechanisms operational in India, with 'Academia-Industry interaction,' as a fulcrum of technical education (Ghosh et al 2007). Higher education and industry linkages should remain alive for constant updating of courses. By

creating the partnership between universities and industry, both can benefit from resources of each other. (Zahid 2008).

Academics will need to be convinced that an institutions' insistence on their incorporating employability skills into their teaching is not an attack on academic freedom in terms of content, but a request that academics consider how they teach their subject (Coopers & Lybrand, 1998; Harvey, 2000a). In relation to the debate concerning core and generic skill provision, (Bennett *et al.* 1999) comment that there was little impact because of tutor doubt of the message, the messenger and its vocabulary. The same is probably true for the employability debate.

The primary role of higher education is to train students by enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities and to empower them as lifelong critical and reflective learners. This is similar to the perspective of the Skills plus Project who see concern for employability as supportive of good learning rather than in opposition to it. Empowering learners is about giving students control over the educational process and their post-educational lives, and (Harvey 2000).

It is essential that any changes to the curriculum are owned by the staff delivering the modules, if they are to be successfully implemented. It is important to work with the traditions and values of the institution and of higher education itself. A culture that strives to improve the learning environment for the benefit of students and staff is essential for the successful implementation of change (Atlay, 2000).

'In the anarchy of individualism that is academia, the response of staff varies unpredictably... little can be achieved without staff commitment accompanied by an agreed change processes. Traditional academic systems at universities may operate against good teaching and teaching innovation since the emphasis for promotion is on research output and quality rather than improvements to the curriculum. (De la Harpe *et al.* 2000).

Public acknowledgement of good teaching is beginning to occur in some universities, for example, teaching professorships in US universities and the incorporation of effective teaching into promotion criteria in New Zealand, (Ski beck & Connell 1996).

The Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) lacked a clear strategy or theoretical orientation for generic skills teaching (or employability for that matter). This is surprising given the policies setting out the importance of the development of these by central government (Dunne *et al.* 2000).

Employability is about graduates possessing an appropriate level of skills and attributes, and being able to use them to gain and remain in appropriate employment. From a human resource development view, employability is a concept that emerged through the 1990s along with a growing perception among employees that they cannot count on their employers for long-term employment (Nabi, 2003).

The teaching of employability skills belongs in the school curriculum. (Poole and Zahn 1993) The career and employability skills should be taught in schools, since many

students leave education without the requisite skills to succeed in the adult work world. (Zinser 2003) Graduates should leave higher education better in many ways than when they enter it. This improvement should be attributable to the undergraduate curriculum which is important to equip them with skills they can use to 'sell themselves' to employers. (Washer 2007)

Fresh graduates, who join the industries, require six months to 2 years as development period to show their contribution and, many a time, they leave the organization before they start showing results. This is due to the gap between theory and practice. The industry, R&D labs should become partners with the centers of higher learning (Modi 2009).

(Paliwal 2009) has focused on coordination among the efforts of academia, industry and the government, also emphasized on instilling the traits which are expected by the prospective employers.

There is need to ensure a common platform for industry and education institutions to work out value-based curriculum taking into consideration the needs of industry (Patel and Popker 1998). The colleges ranked higher for three factors, such as teaching environment, research environment and educational material (Kaur and Bhalla 2009). The time has also come for business schools to develop codes of conduct for MBAs and to withdraw the degrees of those who break the manager's code (Podoniy 2009).

There must be Coordination among the efforts of academia, industry and the government and also encouraging the traits which are expected by the prospective employers (Paliwal Udailal, 2009).

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The development of employability skills based on the joint effects of industry and educational institute. The array of models to enhance employability can be developed which may be subjective to respective industry.

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