Chapter 5

Administration for Implementing Region-Specific Need-Based Programs: Issues and Concerns

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ABSTRACT

Education worldwide now embraces an array of teaching and learning modes, and heterogeneous clientele with various needs and purposes for seeking knowledge and skills. In India, model Regional Specific Need-based Programs (RSNP) are unique for they cater to the need for immediate certification yield, or for knowledge to be developed through validated curricula. The level of sophistication of the programs is dependent on whether admission of clientele is based on mandatory entrant eligibility criteria or the basis of an Assessment of Prior Learning (APL). Needs of the individual clientele should be at the base of developing the program concept and the zeal of developing a program should prevail until the clientele successfully complete the program, culminating in an appropriate placement. This paper offers a practical description of the complex nature of the administrative frameworks necessary for RSNP to yield fruitful, quantifiable results. This paper also identifies the potential opportunities and threats likely to be encountered in each of the stages of development and implementation of an RSNP including ethical considerations in dealing with such programs in the education sector.

INTRODUCTION

Programs based on identifiable needs in a region can be either region specific or learner specific. In either case, the program should target desired skills to be developed and encompass a diverse populace of aspirants. Since skills area factor determining the employability of an individual, wise industries seek to have a say in the curriculum. Formal certification of necessary skills may be jointly given by an

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educational institution and the sponsoring industry to ensure employability, starting with apprenticeship training either as part of the curriculum or upon completion of a formal program.

Industry sponsorship may take several forms that necessitate the availability of funding:

1. Direct involvement of the industry;
2. Mobilizing faculty to handle the preferred curricula on honorary voluntary basis;
3. Funding assistance given to an individual to enroll in program of study; or
4. Reimbursement of the fee paid upon certificate acquisition.

In India, some industry employers view skill impartation/certification as a social responsibility and initiate such ventures for support under the funds they must reserve to demonstrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

According to Frances et al (2010), through interface and social responsibility ventures, firms offer communities access to charitable dollars, employee volunteers, capacity building, training, influencing projects and substantive improvement to social problems. A community engagement strategy involves a pattern of activities implemented by firms to work collaboratively with and through groups of people to address issues affecting their social well-being. (Fawcett et all, 1995; Scantlebury, 2003). A community engagement strategy is a subset of the firm’s CSR that is directed towards individual citizens and community groups.

Industry may sponsor, either in part or in full, post graduate certification and relevant activities pertaining to providing academic support to develop skills and knowledge for productive employment.

**IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY-INDUSTRY JOINT VENTURES IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Each nation has policies governing the establishment of a University, as it is the culmination of aspirants for tertiary education. Similarly, each nation encourages the establishment of industry to make a direct positive impact on the economy of the nation beyond self-sustenance of the products. Each industry has a proprietary interest in defining appropriate initial training for employees so that skills related to the need at the local level are harnessed and peer learning/senior mentoring is initiated. Progressive universities and industries share a common interest in giving something back to the society so that the quality of living of the local populace is ensured by way of the sustained economic activity. Thus both universities and industries should have community outreach in their calendar of activities. In order to ensure optimum reach without duplication of efforts and process, joint ventures in community outreach have evolved. Such formal joint ventures are a win-win situation for universities as they need not be in constant search for sponsors, and the industry gains personnel to transact the curriculum and both gain from a pathway for graduates to employment.

**PREVALENT OF THE TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Education services are varied in nature around the globe. Education may be imparted through an array of means ranging from Teacher Specific-Teacher preferred students as in Gurukulam, to Continuing