

## INTERVIEW



**Prof. (Col) A Balasuramanian, Executive Director, BIMM & Dean BITM, BIIB & BIMHRD President, Sri Balaji Society discusses the importance of enhancing one's skills in the current economic scenario by pursuing further educational/certification courses**

**During testing times like these with people getting laid off, experts suggest that now is the right time for such people to hone their skills by pursuing further education or certification courses. Comment.**

It is easy to say but difficult to practice. It also depends upon the age of the employee and his/her economic condition. One should be positive about the future but cannot be sure about the return on such investments. Formal education does not come free. One has to invest heavily on higher studies and that to in good institutes, which has a track record of placements. Moreover, the workers in general are not affected in a big way in India. They are well protected by the social security legislations. Thus, we are talking about those employees like the software engineers in IT industries who may be affected because of the economic slowdown in the US and Europe. These IT professionals can certainly go for higher studies.

But then, what are the various options available to them, except perhaps the management courses? Certification courses may help them to a limited extent.

**The constant debate of theory v/s practical education continues to prevail. What role can educational institutes play to bridge this gap?**

This debate should end as far as management education is concerned, as they cannot be equated with vocational training. It is an unwanted debate encouraged by a few inefficient professors and visiting faculties who come to the class without any preparation and brag about imparting practical training as they have not gone through books. One should understand that, there are different sectors and different skill sets required for different companies and they are in thousands. Teaching all those things in the classroom is impossible. What is important is that, MBAs should be trained sufficiently enough to grasp new

things quickly and to adapt to new situations without pain. 99 per cent of MBAs join companies as management trainees. They are going to start at bottom level in the managerial cadre and move up slowly or speedily according to their competence which is inherent in them. Moreover, theory is nothing but a recorded version of successful practices in the industry as seen over a period of time globally. Without understanding this thoroughly, one can not go for practical training. For example, in universities like Harvard, Wharton, Kellogg, work experience is prescribed as pre-

students on practical aspects. At least, 250 corporate stalwarts engage classes with our students every year. Infact, many veterans from the industry are teaching either on full time basis or as adjunct faculties and bring their corporate experiences to the industry. We should also note that, engineers are required to do projects with the companies for nearly six months which constitute the major chunk of our intake by prestigious B-Schools. Above all, MBA students are going for summer/winter projects for two months which is a great opportunity for them to have first hand knowledge about the industry. Additionally, we send our students for rural marketing project for 2 months during which period, they have to go and live in remote villages and study the marketing and related aspects in atleast five villages.

**With several organisations freezing recruitments, students (future employees) are highly sceptical about the fate of their careers. What tips would you give them to deal with the situation tactfully and maintain**

**When a company recruits, they look at knowledge, skill, attitude and personality**

condition for admission. Why? And what do the students learn there - Theory, Case studies, simulation exercises, workshops, seminars, corporate interfaces, management games, etc will sufficiently educate and equip the

**an optimistic approach?**

Freezing of recruitment is a temporary phenomena and that indicates that they are more cautious now than ever before. But, there is nothing to be alarmed about. Let us note that, out of 430

million workforce, 94 per cent work in the unorganised sector and about 6 per cent work in the organised sector. On the new employment generated, 1 per cent are government jobs, 2 per cent are in the organised sector and the balance 97 per cent are in the unorganised sector. The government of India says, that, it is providing job to anyone who want to work for 100 days in a year. So the hue and cry is about the 2 per cent job in the industry only. The Indian economy is still vibrant and going strong. The industrial activities are still expanding. More and more companies will keep on coming in different sectors. Fortunately, we have a stable government headed by a renowned economist who is capable of taking matured decisions which will accelerate the industrial growth. Let us not forget our SEZs which have to start operating very soon. Therefore, the job opportunities in the corporate world will have to increase very soon. But the companies will expect high quality MBAs who can perform more efficiently from day one. It means, there is nothing to worry about job opportunities. Infact, more job opportunities will be available. But the big question will be quality and personality of the job hunters. When a company recruits, they look at the 'knowledge, skill, attitude and personality'. If they found these qualities, they will definitely give them an offer.

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