

Impediments and Approaches for Faculty and SME Linkage: Institutional Case Study

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ABSTRACT: - SMEs are vital contributors to the process of commercialization of new knowledge discovered by universities. Understanding impediments and approaches for linkages between a Faculty and SMEs therefore important. The purpose of this Research is to identify the impediments and approaches for the linkages between management Faculty of Jaffna University, and SMEs of the Northern province, Sri Lanka. Data were collected using 14 in-depth interviews and 6 focus group discussions with the Students, Staff, and SMEs. Findings show 10 impediments such as reluctant participation for social contribution, lack of motivation on social participation, curriculum not encouraging field visits, lack of infrastructure facilities, work overload with academic activities, instructive methods not facilitated the voluntary social works, lack of awareness among the staff and students on of community works in the post war context, lack of support from the administration, immense gap exists between academic community and the business sector, and negative attitude towards community participation. This study identified 8 approaches as Altering the pedagogical methods for students centered learning with industry-based curriculum, Incorporating Field visits for co-creation of knowledge, Motivating Faculty level centers for Faculty industry linkage, Attitude change programs inducing self-startup businesses, Inviting stakeholder partners for networking, Outcomes based measures for academic performance, Introducing awards for best solution-oriented Research works, and Quality led approach for student involvement.

KEY WORDS: *Approaches, Impediments, linkages, Management Faculty, SMEs.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Universities are increasingly expected to develop links with business community, at the same time, SMEs need to improve their skills and knowledge base, to develop their competencies and improve the competitiveness. Universities and its Faculties seek link with SMEs for reasons of prestige and possibly access to sponsors, employment opportunities for their graduates. Hence the link between a Faculty and SMEs may have been side-lined although they can be beneficial to both sides.

It is suggested that the development of stronger industry links can enable Universities to improve the employability of their graduates. However, it has been identified that academics working with SMEs face hindrances with existing structures. Simultaneously, SMEs need access to external expertise so that they can improve their knowledge base their long-term competitiveness. Yet Universities tend to seek linkages with larger firms that are more likely to have an extensive knowledge base of their own. Increased collaboration between SMEs and Universities to improve the employment prospects of their graduates.

The University is a social institution with long history and finished the sequences of the periods, it has gone through several stage in its growth. While initial considered as an institution with an instruction mission, the Universities further adopted knowledge generation purpose as Research. In current years new idea has emerged that the University is assuming a third mission contributing to society and economic development more directly, revolving University into profitable University. In today the Faculties which producing human capital to the society has the full responsibility on their quality output, which seek for employability at supreme level, but this employability is expected to be searched from the competitive world with global challenges.

At the time when a society facing global challenges ground breaking ideas and profitable leaderships are the important engine for motivating long-term competitiveness, creating jobs, generating renewed economic growth and advancing human welfare (Volkman, et al, 2009). It is now generally accepted that the novelty and collaborative linkages are the most important engine for long term competitiveness, and growth of employments can be driven from the improved collaboration between industry and academia (Etzkowitz et al, 2000). The triple helix model states that the University can play an enhanced role in invention in increasing knowledge-based societies (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000).

Universities are the compounds of indirect and direct employment opportunities, which can be further enriched by the connection with the external stakeholders, as industrial people. (Klofsten and Joonas-Evans, 2000). Universities contribute to the Research and development capacity of an economy in different ways as

creating new knowledge from basic Research, producing specialized human capital or transferring innovation from academia to industry (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2003). Moreover, in recent years policy makers have become increasingly interested in boosting that last option via patenting, licensing, by products, firm formation and other linkage methods (Philpott, et al 2011).

Universities also have different scientific specialization (Bonaccorsi et al, 2011). While some Universities specialize in basic sciences, such as mathematics or physics, others specialize in applied sciences, such as engineering, others focus on social sciences and humanities. As the result many Universities are able to respond to the different needs of firms operating in different industries. In particular while it has been shown that Universities specialize in basic sciences tend to establish partnership with firms operating high tech industries (Laursen, et al, 2011). It has been documenting that Faculties specializing in engineering influence production and system, while Faculties specializing in business management and other social sciences seems to be less important in production system but they seem to be more important in business management as marketing human resources, finance, accounting and other trade activities.

Empirical studies conformed the SMEs are prefer to hire graduates, who have impact of innovativeness of the firms, and hiring if graduate from the management background has significant positive impact upon the frequency organizational change (Nielsen, 2007). The low demand for the graduates in the private sector reflects the barriers that restrict the hiring of graduates, but more important is stagnation in terms of technical and organizational change. When it is realized that almost all knowledge relevant for innovation has tacit as well as codified elements, it become obvious that the flow of graduates into industry is the most powerful mechanism through which knowledge creation at Universities can contribute to innovation in business (Brundenius et al, 2009).

The University where it is located facing global challenge which extent will beyond the economy innovation and entrepreneurship provide a way forward by building sustainable development, creating self-employment, reducing unemployment, generating renewed economic growth and advancing human welfare (Volkman, et al, 2009). This more protuberant role of Universities in revolution, the steady diffusion of collaborative relationships between Universities and industries and change in the traditional functions of these actors have been manufactures in the Triple helix model (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000). Triple helix model states that the knowledge-based organizations can play enhanced role in innovation in increasingly knowledge-based activities (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000). SMEs in Northern Sri Lanka have been recognized as vehicle for economic development and means to previously disadvantages population. Despite support from the Government and Non-Government organizations SME sector does not seen live up to expectations by growing in size and consequently creating much more employment. Cook and Morgan (1993) suggested that regional development cannot be considered separately from cultural, social and institutional activities. All of these activities should be taken into account when discussing about regional development. The relations of higher education institutions with their socio-economic environment have become a topical issue in the literatures on higher education over the past few years.

Faculties in Universities produce graduates specialized in management or business administration play a crucial role within the system of research for innovation, transfer knowledge on business administration and skills dispersal to firms (Archibugi and Flipperti, 2017). Existing higher education doesn't duly take into account the type of activities carryout in the linkage with the SMEs. One of the reasons behinds these facts that the undergraduates are not trained or exposed to be self-starter for new ideas. Existing curriculum of the Faculties in many Universities allows undergraduates to partake on the industrial training at firms at last semester of the degree programme. Few undergraduates tend to work in private sector most of them prefer to work at government institutions. Reason for this attitude, is that they have not been allowed to link with the industries since their entrance to the University. In other words, the knowledge produced by the Universities has soft nature (Stein, 2002). In order to use this knowledge, reading scientific publications or academic patent is not enough. rather direct interactions with the Faculty staff is required. In addition, as noted above developing such knowledge required dedicate and Research centers, which constructed by the Faculties force the choices of future Research areas, with SMEs.

From this above view as same as Pava and RossiLamastra (2013) suggested that future studies on the performance of University industry linkage might make a first step to fill this gap by explorative in nature to understand the barriers and identify the system methods for linkage. Van den Bosch and Van Prooijen (1992) recommended in order to better understand a national culture consequence on competitive advantage through the synergy linkage between Faculties and SMEs should be studies for institutional perspective in a specific context.

Much of the Research in this area of linkages between University and SMEs has been biased towards the University view point, that it how the University Researchers can overcome institutional barriers that inhibit them from working across the University -SMEs sector. Present study tries to fill this gap via understanding the constraints and approaches for having Faculty SME linkage.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Linkage is defined as channels through which enterprises influences each other's economic performance, between large and small companies are crucial to the success of a market economy. University can play an enhanced role in innovation in increasingly knowledge-based societies through forming direct links with industry to maximize capitalization of knowledge, and that academia should closely integrate with the industrial world (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 2000). Universities are the sources of knowledge that lies at the frontier of technological possibilities and translate into new opportunities for the benefits of Universities via interacting with industries (Acs, et al, 2009).

Institutional support is must for recovery of any country (Hall and Johns, 1999; Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001). University participation in community development is must for economy recovery of the affected community (Gough, 2007), where the academicians are expected to actively engage with the business development of the society, and to do many collaborative applied Researches works with the stakeholders of the business sector (Brindis, Ralph, Spertus, and John, 2006).

The triple helix model explains the interactions among University industry and government, the three equal interdependent institutional spheres are said be the source of innovation and development (Esham, 2008). The industry considered linkages as important for enhancing success in terms of bringing student closer to the industry. The Faculty members of Universities consider consultancy and Research arrangement more important than the other linkage activities in training and educational activities. (Vaaland, nd Ishengoma, 2016). The quality of teaching judged by the quality of learning that takes place outside the classroom (David, Paul, Kira, and MARRISA, 2008). It allows the students to gaining access to basic knowledge (Caloghirou, et al, 2001; Feller 2005). However specialized Faculties in Universities are also the providers of solutions to administrative problems that firms face in their daily work.

Indeed, Universities are increasingly active in related to entrepreneurship and commercialization activities include consulting contracts with firms (Rentocchini, et al, 2011), for the solution of complexed problems, which require advanced knowledge and specialized skills that firms often do not have in house. Linkage between SMEs allow the Faculties to access a wide network of potential future partners within academia. Academic Researchers certainly work very closely with each other, and uphold strong links with Researchers interested in similar topics in other national and international Universities and very few works with SMEs (Murray, 2002).

The work by Seppo and Lilles (2012) has recognized that various types of collaborations exists and has identified eight types: curriculum development; and delivery; lifelong learning; student mobility; academic mobility; commercialization of R&D results; collaboration in R&D; entrepreneurship; and Governance (Davey et al, 2011).

Poter's cluster or diamond model (1990), and the triple helix model of the University, industry government interactions developed mainly by Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff (1997,1998,2000). The first level of made up of the industrial clusters within the country (producers, buyers and suppliers), the second level consist of a set of institutions and organizations which supports the learning process in industrial clusters. These institutions include Universities financial institutions, physical infrastructures and technological support. The final level is the set of policies that stimulate the learning processes between industrial clusters and institutions. National Innovation System (NIS) theory was introduced by Freeman (1987), and Lundvall(1992), University, industry and government are identified as the main pillars of the innovation system including NIS, Triple helix model, and Porter's diamond model.

Lee (1996) found that Universities view that value of collaboration highly if it resulted in upgraded infrastructure and grants for Faculty members. A further benefit could be formation of spin-off companies that financially benefit Researcher and University (Liu and Jiang, 2001). Dexter et al (2007) identified a list of factors that motivate University business transfer of technologies. The main ones are loyalty programmes, support to business, good publicity for the University, financial support, recruitment and retention of staff. Others include: enhancement of teaching, job offers for graduates, and also creating an entrepreneurial culture in their institutions (Rene and Heinrich, 2006). Funding cuts or decrease in funding by ministry of education could be potential external driver for the University to seek outside funding and as the consequences collaborate with industry (Laukkanen, 2003).

Further access to new ideas and technologies, that creates competitive advantages, reduction in, their own R&D, greater speed to market with new technology, recruitment, and retention of staff, and access to highly specialized University facilities (Dexter, et al, 2007, Fritas et al, 2007, Dooley and Kirk, 2007). Availability of efficient linkages policy framework in Universities, lack of in house R&D facilities, and the shortening product life cycle, access to the Universities physical facilities, experience of staff, access to the Research and consultancy services, improved public image in the society, improving sales and profitability, increase qualification level of employees, creating awareness culture to the institutions, gaining technical

knowledge, recruiting graduates, and quality improvements are considered as the approaches of Faculties and SMEs for enhancing the linkages (James and Casey, 2004; Lee and Win, 2004; Radas, 2005).

Improvements in linkages processes include the availability of an appropriate organizational structure, process and contexts within the University is crucial in order to channel academic R&D towards exploitation (Debackere and Veugelers, 2005). Decentralization is crucial; Universities require sufficient autonomy to develop Research policies and relationship with companies. This issue is also very important inside the University for developing relations with industry (Debackere, and Veugelers, 2005). Government policies can encourage companies to develop partnerships with Universities for example proving tax incentives and funding program that requires industries to work with Universities as condition of their funding (Rynes et al, 2001).

Huggins and Johnston (2009), suggested that Universities can be regarded as key sources of knowledge that can be used in the pursuit of economic growth, especially so given the importance of knowledge commercialization and transfer activities in the University sector. The literature supports this perspective and see this linkage as important in order for SMEs to staff technically ahead (Hendry, et al, 2000; Bougrain and Haudeville, 2002; VanLooy et al, 2003; Hadjimonalis, 2006) however there are those who questions the effectiveness of Universities as the source of innovation for SMEs (Hoffman, et al, 1998).

The links between Universities and SMEs have been encouraged by policy makers in many countries (Lambert, 2003; Sainbury, 2007). The literature not only argues that these links are needed for technological reasons (Hendry et al, 2000; Bougrain and Haudeville, 2002; Van Looy et al 2003; Hadjimanolis, 2006), but also the effectiveness of the Universities as the source of technology is questionable (tang et al, 1996; Hoffman et al, 1998). However Tether and swann (2003) demonstrated that there are many links that can exists between Universities and industry, including Research collaborations and graduate employment (jones et al, 2011). Impediments identified from the past studies include informal and cultural barriers between Universities and SME sector, and insufficient rewards for Faculty industry linkage, such as credit towards tenure and promotion (Lee, 1996; Siegel et al, 2004; Dooly and Kirk, 2007). Lack of understanding between Universities and SME via scientific norms and environment; bureaucracy and the inflexibility of University administration and insufficient resources devoted to linkages by Universities (Siegel et al, 2004). University institutional rigidity, fragmented organizations, and the lack of mutual trust between firms and Universities have been found to limit University industry interactions in developing countries (Bouhamed et al 2009; Singer and Peterka, 2009).

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To Find out the Impediments of Faculty and SME linkage
2. Proposing the approaches for Faculty and SME linkage

IV. METHODOLOGY

The model of the Research is inductive. The present study focused on the qualitative methodology, Institutional case study to understand Impediments and approaches for the linkage between the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the Jaffna University and SMEs of Northern Province. Purposive sampling methods was used to collect primary data from 20 staff, and 40 final year students, and 30 SMEs (Table 1). SMEs were selected from the list of Northern chambers of industries, Researcher selected the participates, those who were willing to link with the management Faculty. Secondary data were collected from the institutional documents, and primary data were collected using 5, 3, 6 in-depth interviews with staff, students and SMEs respectively and 2, 2, and 2 focus group discussions with the staff, students, and SMEs respectively. Data were collected and digitally recorded, and coded in the computer with the help of the NVIVO (version 09) software. Secondary data were collected from the institutional documents, Journals and Books.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Respondents		Male	Female	Total
Staff		09	11	20
Students		22	18	40
SMEs	Micro 12	Small 10	Medium 8	Total 30

Data collection

The data collection included both semi structures interviews and focus group discussions. Tailored semi structured field guides were developed for each type of staff, student and SMEs interviews. Each data collection guide included the problems related to the linkage between SMEs and academicians and undergraduate of the Faculty. Author did the interview with the staff and students of the Faculty, and SMEs. Interviews lasted approximately one hour were conducted in academic setting, and were audio recorded and later transcribed. Field notes were taken to describe the interview context. The analytic framework applied

consisted of the following; data management, data display, data reduction, drawing conclusion, and verifying conclusions. This Research used the Nvivo 09 to analysis the data.

Data analysis

Data analysis involved which involves analyzing textual data closely in order to identify key concepts and underlying process, guided the data reduction and analysis process (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The data reduction process began with “open coding,” which consisted of closely examining the data in order to identify, describe, and develop emerging concepts. For this set of analyses, passages that described how data were used to identify the Impediments and approaches for management Faculty and SMEs linkage and were identified in the text and labelled with the code, “linking data to impediments”, and “approaches”. Comments were made to describe and define the code. This helped ensure that its meaning and its application were used consistently throughout the analysis. The coding process began on paper, and later, using the QDA software, codes and comments were electronically recorded.

Axial coding, the next step in the data reduction process, involved making connections between concepts in order to refine emerging categories and develop explanations related to how academicians, undergraduates can be linked with SMEs (Strauss & Corbin 1998). All text coded as “Impediments” and “Approaches” were reviewed to gain further insight into constraints on linkage activities. A report was generated using the QDA software that consisted of the passages of text coded as “Impediments and Approaches” along with the associated comments.

The data demonstration, review and drop steps were closely connected at this point of the analysis. Using the QDA report, conditions were created to describe the different ways academics, undergraduates and SMEs can be linked. Records matrices are ordered tables that display and organize data to readily identify patterns. Passages of text that described similar ways of linking academicians, undergraduates and SMEs were automatically censored and fixed into a data matrix. The consequential data conditions exposed that the code labelled “Impediments” and “Approaches” described 08 discrete ways, the academicians and undergraduates, and SMEs can be linked and 10 as impediments for these linkages. These findings were written up in a “memo,” a document used to record and make sense of emerging patterns, meanings, or ideas related to the phenomena of interest (Patton, 2002).

Descriptive codes

The development of descriptive codes was based on the response’s academics, students and SMEs. For this purpose, this Research used NVivo, the computer assisted software for qualitative data analysis. Data analysis of the study began with reviewing all text line by line, and then code/labels were assigned to the words, sentences and paragraphs in the texts. The data collected from academics, students and SMEs helped in constructing 27, 23, 1nd 24 descriptive codes respectively (Refer Table No 2 below).

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTIVE CODES STAFF, STUDENTS, AND SMEs

Staff	Students	SMEs
Lack of motivation	Boring passive learning	Interactive mechanism
Financial assistants	Practical assignments	Consultation by staff
Proper channels	Few academics give case studies	Social network creation
No system	Knowledgebase	University government link in industry development
Internal conflicts	Industrial training	University industry partnership
Infrastructure facilities	Systematic methods	Student projects
Continuous assessment	Assignment exams	On the job training to students
Curriculum revision	New teaching methods	Training at the Faculty
Active student learning	No practical exposure	Transforming management knowledge
Conducive environment	Stakeholder participation	Consultation by students
Motivation to staff	Self-learning	Success story telling at lecture halls
Academic training	Faculty interaction	Business plan preparation
Inactive units	Student industry partnerships	Joint Research
Faculty interactions	Awards scheme	Research awards
Negative attitude	Field visits	Practical thesis for solution

Altering the pedagogical methods	Case study analysis	Student centered learning
students centered learning	Practical assignments	Student business partnerships
Social network creation	Co-creation of knowledge	New pedagogical methods
self-learning:	Networking system	Co-creation of knowledge
practicing knowledge	Automatic process	Participation of industry in quality assurance mechanism
Field work for creation of	Inactive cells	Consultation for curriculum development
Student business partnerships	Knowledge on private sector	Attitude change in private sector employment
community interaction	Negative attitude	On field experience
risk-taking in privatization	Outcome based measures	Field experience
Service quality assurance		Initiating cell
Diversified networking		
Outcome based academic measures		
Critical solutions for real case studies		

The next stage of data analysis is to reduce these descriptive codes via repackaging and combining the data to develop groups. Classifying helps a Researcher organize and group similar codes into categories or families based on similar characteristics (Saldana, 2008). At this stage, the long list of descriptive codes would be reduced through refining, merging and integrating to categories based on their similarities and the way the respondents interpret them (Saldana, 2008). Refer to Table No 3 below for the categories that were developed in this study.

TABLE 3: CATEGORIES LINKING ACADEMICS, STUDENTS AND SMEs

Academics	Students	SMEs
Pedagogical methods	Exposure from Enterprises	Solution oriented Research works
Student centered learning	Training throughout the year	Field experience for learning
Outcome based measures	Case study analysis	Filed experience for teaching
Social network creation	students centered learning	Consultation for curriculum development
Co construction of Curriculum	Social network creation for self-learning	Social network creation
Diversified network facility	Field work for creation of knowledge	empowering cells for links SMEs
Attitude change	Field work for practicing knowledge	Internship training as lesson learning
Student business partnerships	attitude change	New teaching methods
Service quality assurance	Case study analysis	Attitude change
Stakeholder feedback	Student business partnerships	Active student learning environment
Student business partnership	Co-creation of knowledge	Industry based curriculum

Themes: Process of identifying categories resulted 33 new ideas as how academics, students and SMEs can be linked. After developing categories, the next step was to reduce 08 categories further through identifying patterns among categories and then developing higher level abstractions (themes) (Refer Table No 4 below).

TABLE 4: IDENTIFIED THEMES AS APPROACHES FOR THE FACULTY SMEs LINKAGES

Approach 1	Altering the pedagogical methods for students centered learning with industry-based curriculum
Approach 2	Incorporating Field visits for co-creation of knowledge
Approach 3	Motivating Faculty level centers for Faculty industry linkage
Approach 4	Attitude change programs inducing self-startup businesses
Approach 5	Inviting stakeholder partners for networking and student leadership
Approach 6	Outcomes based measures for academic performance
Approach 7	Introducing awards for best solution-oriented Research works
Approach 8	Quality led approach for student involvement

V. KEY FINDINGS

At the initial coding step, Researcher found 74 initial codes or concepts then at the second stage via axial coding 33 categories or concepts identified. 08 core categories were identified as approaches. At the second stage of data analysis 52 initial codes or concepts were developed as the impediments, then this initial codes have been reduced at the axial coding to categories or concepts were developed and at the final coding 10 core categories were found as the impediments, such as reluctant participation for social contribution, lack of motivation on social participation, curriculum not encouraging field visits, lack of infrastructure facilities, work overload with academic activities, instructive methods not facilitated the voluntary social works, lack of awareness among the staff and students on of community works in the post war context, lack of support from the administration, immense gap exists between academic community and the business sector, and negative attitude towards community participation. This study recommend the Faculty to immediately revise their curriculum to incorporate the active student participation, introduce innovative teaching and learning methods, encourage the students for involving business partnerships, regularize the mechanism for implementing outcome based measures in academic performance.

Students responded that existing pedagogical methods should be changes, to insert the value of industrial exposure to the students and staff. Traditional teaching methods no longer applicable in the present teaching and learning environment because the technological change has been flushing up the trends in traditional education.

“Existing teaching and learning environment is no longer sufficient to us and we need a new method for learning, learning knowledge and theories in the class room that we feel more traditional and boring to us, we expect from the teachers, a practical exposure with the new curriculum which has industrial visits as well as industrial training as the part of each course units.”

[Student Transcript: 8, line 80-85].

Students and staff of the Faculty expect a modification in curriculum, which foster activities involves the learner center teaching methods, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain and debate or brainstorm during classes. the Faculty needs a cooperative learning, in which students work in teams on problems and projects of SMEs sector that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability: and inductive learning, in which students can first present with the challenges of SMEs.

The students and academics may be offered training lessons in various SMEs keeping in view of their specialization. The curriculum of the Faculty should be redesign by incorporation of SME linkages as core requirements in each subject. For this purpose, opinion of this industry experts cannot be ignored. The dominant impediments identified in this Research: lack of proper procedures and mechanism to collaborate with the industry. The absence of University policy and frame work to promote partnership is seen as a major constraint on the development of the Faculty -industry linkages. Lack of funding from government and other sources to strengthen Research capacities there is no Research center within the Faculty to carryout Research for the industry. Lack of motivation has been cited as more series by the staff while student has cited lack of Research center for collaborative Research work with the industries.

Furthermore, SMEs pursuit for sustainable business, but the Faculty maintain a gap with them, there are few entrepreneurial activities take place at the Faculty. These activities are limited with the market opportunities, but SMEs expect a maintainable growth for their business with the relative contribution of students and academic staff. Students’ willingness to participate in the private sector is very low most of the students preferred to have government jobs, for this reason they choose their specialization, which provide them.

One of the small-scale producers mentioned that

“We look for management people who have responsible amount of industry experience in applied Research with first degree. Some of them have master degrees are expected to be able to contribute to marketing projects. they are expected to manage small business with good management skill...they are not willing, but we will pay them good salary.”

[Transcript: 4, line 10-12]

Concerns were also expressed about the competitive strength and the lack of knowledge on competitive analysis, and need for professional assistance on competitive advantage strategies.

I don't think it is perceived as something negative by the customers and the markets, but from our point of view, coupled with the fact that there is often competitive fight in the market due to lack of proper institutional support, intermediate events, and value chain we did not reached the market quickly. Customers enjoyed the tail of the competitors offer (coming from other regions) our products are avoided by the customers, we always loss our potential market, we don't know how to compete with the marketing strategies.

[Transcript: 7, Line 100-106]

The lack of understanding is not reserved only for experts in the business service world, but SMEs too. They have also witnessed an organization see its profits plunge as management tried to install practices, they had seen in larger organization see its profits plunge as management tried to install practices, they had seen in larger organizations, trampling over the company's core SME was or what it needed took place. This led to the death of dynamism and innovation in as it inadvertently changed to be like everyone.

“Northern Sri Lanka suffered lot due to the prolonged war, which made a mark on the social as well as the business sustainability. Transformation of live hoods needs to withstand for community development. Micro marketers are the people who suffered lot due to war and lost their family heads and started micro marketing activities to fulfill their day to day needs by initiating livelihood income generating g activities as small business they need to collaborate with academic community of higher education”

(Transcript 5: line 32-36)

Our people working on behalf of the industry are sent to the customer. There are different employees in our industry. People have to communicate properly to make sure that we still have the control. We prefer to give trial to the customers but it always fails, customers compare the products of the outside marketers, with the local marketers, we offer the same quality products at the cheapest price... but they purchase competitive products at the highest price... we don't know how to identify the real needs of the customers, we feel that University specially the management people can do Research for us”

[Transcript: 7, line 72-78].

Staff of the Faculty also expressed that the teaching and learning methodology should be changed to meet the current needs of the students in the job market. They said that new pedagogical methods should support the student's centers learning for industrial exposure. SMEs mentioned that they need solutions from the professionals, they felt that academicians would give ideas on the different business solutions for their products. Many small-scale producers expressed they need knowledge transformation from the different department of the Faculty to make their products best quality.

There are lot of dismissals in our manufacturing plant to produce excellence products, we produce many products with very good features and at very inexpensive price in the market, distributors asking us to have more quality products at the affordable rate ... it is perceptibly annoying because no one wants the local branded products we need help to modify with the innovative ides we feel that students and staff in the University can help us to improve our business in many ways.

[Transcript: 8, Line 16-18]

SMEs mentioned that they need the close supervision of the academic in the Faculty for their functional activities of their industry.

“If anybody helps me to inform my product and get orders, I can happily continue my business. I would like to attend seminar in Universitiesto get advice on marketing aspects.... I and other micro level producers expect help from higher institutions to survive in the market. Because some of the marketers doing unethical sales to customers, how can we overcome form their activities”

[Transcript: 6, line 23-27]

“Faculty can involve in Research activities to identify the potential market opportunities. Research activities, linkages with other Universitieswhich involve in SME initiatives. Faculty undergraduates can teach management concepts and business behaviors which may influence on the SMEs marketing activities”

[Transcript: 12, line 60-64]

“We cannot change the graduate employment landscape overnight, and we certainly cannot do it alone. But together we can facilitate positive change in our local communities. Let’s talk openly with course leaders and academics to ensure employability and soft skills are a focus throughout college and University education”

[Transcript: 10, line 30-34]

VI. CONCLUSION

Faculty should have linkage with SMEs to gain and share knowledge. Student should be aware of the importance of field work, and they can share knowledge with the business people to share knowledge on their experience. Students should change their attitude by experiencing the success stories of SMEs and they have to be motivated for risk taking in privatization. During the field visits, students should be able to collect the cases of SMEs and they shall be allowed to present at the lecture discussions.

Academic staff of the Faculty should be encouraged through outcome-based performance, for instances number of SMEs protected by each staff, number of publications on solving the issues of SMEs, Number of consultations listed on SMEs, number of participations at the workshops for local business community. Lecturers must have updated knowledge of industrial setup and management (Marketing, HRM, Finance, Accounting, Trade, IT) problems faced by different industries. Various institutions like banks, NGOs, Industries should also sponsor various Research projects conducted by students in order to encourage Research environment. Faculty should consider quality assurance policing protecting the links between the Faculty and the business community. Students should be encouraged to have partnership with industries, and they can be allowed to make profit via collaborative works with SMEs during graduation.

The Research activities should be carried out under the guidance of both industry and academic supervisors. Students must receive clear directions for their Research studies via the collaboration and the Research findings can be easily commercialized to the respective SMEs. Further, they intend to have consultation session for SMEs and other business community on their request. This is a kind of consultancy for the issues in the organizations and Faculty can earn money in return. The students, who work as the Research assistants and they will be paid an incentive. Therefore, this activity entirely helping to ensure the survival of the institution as higher education institution by supporting industrial sector.

Working with business community in groups benefits to all parties. Whether in terms of Research collaboration, building community relations, being good neighbors or making a positive contribution to the life of the Faculty, community engagement is important on many levels not only from an ethical consideration of corporation with community yields rewards to students and community partners alike.

The main effective steps to promote interaction as perceived by academics are improvement of Research center facilities, encouragement of industrial visits by academics and students and giving publicity to University activities relevant to industry and setting up of University- industry interaction cells in universities.

It is accepted that both Faculty and SMEs considered that the concerted action of institutions within country and its social and economic impact beyond specific Research collaboration projects are of great importance. In this respect, the impact in terms of skill development and enhanced employment opportunities seem especially relevant and the Faculty wish to be the country wise knowledge hub by gathering and dissemination Accounting, Human Resource, Marketing, Finance and Commerce related knowledge to the Nation. Furthermore, the Faculty can consider that the specific outcomes and solutions of collaborative Research projects are needed to be commercialized for value, to all relevant parties including government, policy makers, institutions and other external partners. In addition to that, the Research outcomes can be acknowledged way of Journal publications and appoint Research conferences in order to concern on the industrial sector as the first priority in every agenda.

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