

## **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