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An Empirical Study on Corporate Expectation from Technical Institutions in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract:
The pace at which the Technical institutions are growing in the country is phenomenal. One may connect it to the economic development of the country, but it is seen that there is a hitch for the corporate when they recruit the technical students. They find a kind of disconnect between the students and themselves. This disconnect can be in terms of knowledge, skills, curriculum, mindset, attitude etc. The present paper focuses on the 3 main areas i.e. Knowledge, Attitude and Skills on which the institutions need to work so that the students become industry ready. A Questionnaire was prepared on SERQUAL, asking respondents to indicate on the likert scale of 1-5 about their Expectations and Perception, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree". Data collection was done on the basis of Judgmental and Quota Sampling. Apart from using structured questionnaires, interviews were conducted to gain the insight of what they expected from the institutions imparting technical education. The interviews were semi-structured and addressed the key issues related to knowledge, skills and attitude. Descriptive statistical techniques which included mean and standard deviation were used. Of the three parameters Knowledge, Attitude and skills, the major gap between the expectation and perceived satisfaction was seen for skills (Mean score 1.82). The industry feels that there is a lot of scope for improvement in terms of improving the skills of the students.

Keywords: Corporate Expectation, Madhya Pradesh, Employability, linkage between institutions and corporate sector, Technical Institutions

1. Introduction

Technical education is the backbone of any country which is trying to achieve a strong global position. Apart from promoting equality and social justice, the objective of technical education is to provide the right kind of technical skills to the people so that they can use it for the betterment of the country.

The foundation of technical education was laid in India almost at the same time as in Europe, but its growth was diminutive till India became independent. Evidences reveal that engineering schools existed in Calcutta and Mumbai as early as 1825, but the first genuine industrial school established at Guindy, Madras in 1840 by Major Maitland, superintendent of the Gun Carriage Factory[i].

In 1947, there were hardly about 38 institutions offering first degree courses in engineering and technology and training at the technician's level in only selected areas. These numbers were not significant for the economic development of the country. A massive increase in the number of technical institutions has taken place in the country since independence.

The state of Madhya Pradesh has 32 universities in total, in which, there are 12 general universities (37.5% of total), 5 technical universities (15.6 %), 10 other universities (31.2 %), 2 agriculture universities (6.2%) and 1 law universities (3.1%)[ii].

The Technical Education in Madhya Pradesh is controlled by the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Bhopal. The state recognized that, the new global scenario poses exceptional challenges for the technical education system. Government of Madhya Pradesh, launched various schemes during the eleventh five year plans and was able to achieve the targets set by it to a large extent.

In Madhya Pradesh, technical education started showing positive move from the beginning of the eleventh five year plan. The expansion and development of technical education have been exceptional during 2007-12 both in number of institutions and intake capacity. The annual intake capacity in the technical institutions for different courses in 2006-07 was 71761 which increased to 163735 by 2011-12.Thus an increase of 128.2% in terms of intake capacity has been registered during eleventh five year plan[iii].

As the demand for technically educated manpower is increasing substantially every year, the major challenge is on sustaining the quality so that students become employable.

2. Review of Literature

A work done by Arjariya. et al.[iv] in the state of Madhya Pradesh stressed on data mining to be used in order to identify and resolve the problems in higher education.

A study done Bhuria and Dixit[v] revealed that Government of Madhya Pradesh is also putting its efforts to enhance the quality of Technical education in the state and students satisfaction level from these institutions. The government has introduced Online Off-campus counseling through which students can get an idea of the institutions in which they are interested to get admission, thus giving them more satisfaction.

A survey done by Parthasarathy and Pingle[vi] with college management and faculty members of 46 educational institutions across India, including the state of Madhya Pradesh focused on the need of Talent Management in Technical Institutions. They stressed that the academicians and Management of the Technical institutions should focus on Talent Management system and make plans and strategies accordingly.

Dwivedi and Mahara[vii] in a study laid on emphasis on development Quality Model for Management Education. The model will help to improve the productivity and will increase the employability. They also stressed that institutions should work in a direction which will develop students with Disciplined Mind, Respectful mind, creative mind and the ethical mind.

A study done by Modi[viii] revealed that because of the huge gap between the practical and theory, the technical students joining the company find it difficult to adjust with the environment and need lot of time to prove to the company their actual worth. Those with some strong will power struggle, but often it leads to leaving the company.

Analyzing the Gap in the Indian technical education Priya Raina, Dr. S. S. Bhadouria and Dr. Charu Shri[ix] concluded that institutions must pay attention on the theoretical concepts rather than practical knowledge. The curriculum should be designed in association with the industry people and focus should be on how to use the knowledge acquired from the books.

A work done by M. Vijay kumar and Dr. S. Ramalingam[x] tried to give an insight to the Technical institutions about the factors that are commonly considered in the interview and their importance so that students can be trained in that manner only.

A study done by Ghosh et al[xi] concealed that the technical institutions must involve the industry during the framing of the curriculum, which will make the students' industry ready from the beginning of the course, It will also reduced the fear and anxiety of the students while entering the organization.

Work done by Prof. Neeraj K. Dubej, Dr. Saurabh Goyal, Prof. Ravindra Pathak and Dr. Uday Singh Rajput[xii] reveals that soft skill is the most important factor which can help to bridge the gap between the academic output and industrial requirement other than basic theoretical concepts.

To improve the employability of the students & enhance the quality of manpower required in the industry Deepali Wankhade & Pravin Dhokane[xiii] portrayed there should be regular interaction between industry and academia to know the changing trends in technology required in terms of IT processes. Faculty should be given training on latest trends and technologies by industry expert. HR requirement portal should be developed and used effectively from both ends. Industry and institutions should create the professionals with global mindset so that they can adjust in different culture & social settings.

Posner[xiv] conducted a study to understand the similarity among the recruiters; faculty and students in terms of expectations regarding job characteristics. Expectation of students differed in job variety, status of the company, competent co-workers, job security and ability to noticeable good work to superiors, company's repute and periphery benefits. Challenging work, using abilities and learning atmosphere were given much importance by the students and job title, size of the company and scope for extensive travel were avoided by the studnets.

Parmley et al.[xv] revealed that students look for jobs that have potential for future earnings, promotion opportunities and employer location.

Zhao[xvi] conducted a study in China with the objective to investigating the difference in expectations of the applicants and recruiters in China. Zhao's study concluded that significant differences exist between recruiters and students in terms of organization's size, occupation reputation, organizational culture, job security and voicing opportunity.

A live chat organized by Careers360[xvii] with Dr. Deepak Bhootra, Director, Hewlett-Packard on the topic 'What do corporate look for in an MBA?' revealed that corporate are looking for both intellect, consistency in performances across one's education and professional backgrounds and skills relevant to their business. It is more about how a graduate fits himself to the needs of the corporate as well as how he/she can be molded to what the corporate needs.

A research done by the World Bank[xviii] on " Employer's expectation from Fresher", uncovered the skills which Indian employers demand from engineering graduates can be classified into 3 factors namely communication skills, Professional Skills and Core employability Skills. Of the 3, though core employability skills is the most important, but Communication skills can be easily considered easily, followed by Professional skills through the process of interview.

Dr. George Sleeba, Dean, AISAT[xix], delivered a talk on 'Expectations of Industry' and suggested ways to develop the employability skills of students without affecting their academics. Apart from technical skills student must be capable of problem solving and must have good human relationships. Other qualities required are willingness to bear responsibility, self-discipline and ability to meet the target etc. Another requirement of an employee is personal traits and skills. They can be listed like positive attitude, teamwork, flexibility and ability to work under pressure. Apart from this he must have good communication skills, computer literacy.

European Working Conditions Observatory, a study was conducted a study in Hungary exploring employer's expectation in relation to recent graduates. The study focuses on types of soft skills that employers look for from young workers beyond professional knowledge and competence. It was found that employers have similar expectations of recent graduates, regardless of their filed of training, and are particular critical of their language skills, practical experience and motivation levels.

A survey done in the southeastern United States revealed that employers give weighatge to values in the following order: Communication skills, analytical skills, teamwork skills, technical skills and work ethics, whereas students rate their work ethic and teamwork skills among their highest abilities.

Dabur India feels that it is important to check other candidates for their ability to be team players. The ability to interact and understand other cultures has also been mentioned as an important attribute. According to Wipro Spectramind, Delhi, "Behavioral tests to identify profiles will help". Everready Industries, Calcutta contends, "Group tasks" should be given to the students which need to be completed in a limited period of time with a team. Since students who come together as a team are not acquainted earlier with each other, it can be a good check on their team orientation.

3. Purpose of the Study

A number of studies are done on corporate expectations from academia but hardly any research has been done in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The present study "An Empirical study on the corporate expectation from Technical Institutions in the state of Madhya Pradesh" in itself is the first comprehensive study of the Technical education in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Every year, the number of technical colleges and number of students graduating technical courses in Madhya Pradesh is massive. Though one may feel proud of the situation, but the question arises that despite the fact the number of technical graduates are increasing, still many of them are either unemployed or are not getting jobs of their choice. It was with this intension that the study was taken up. Outcome of this research, are intended to give the policy makers of the technical institutions a framework, on the basis of which corporate expectation can be met to a vast extent.

4. Research Methodology

A Questionnaire was prepared which included both open and closed ended question. Closed ended questions included a total of 20 questions based on SERQUAL, asking respondents to indicate on the likert scale of 1-5 about their Expectations and Perception, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

The parameters used in closed ended questions were Knowledge (seven variables), attitude (six variables) and skills (seven Variables). One, open ended questions was included in the questionnaire to know the opinion of the Corporate on the areas on which technical education should focus more so that students are readily acceptable by the Industry.

4.1. Data Collection

Data collection was done on the basis of Judgmental and Quota Sampling. On the basis of Judgmental Sampling, a general discussion was done by the researcher with the placement officers of the Engineering and Management institutions. A list of the companies hiring students from these institutions was provided, on the basis of which, the researcher contacted the companies.

Quota sampling was also used due to the following reason:
- There was no proper list to cover the entire population
- To reduce the cost

4.1.1. A Link for the Questionnaire

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/17RjpLbNW9hLd2RGi01qn_DldOrHpX8UxbnuHDUUOIgI/viewform was created on the Google to get the response of the corporate. A sample size of 30 was selected with the objective of gaining completion of at least of 20 questionnaires. Apart from using structured questionnaires, interviews were conducted to gain the insight of what they expected from the institutions imparting technical education. The interviews were semi-structured and addressed the key issues related to knowledge, skills and attitude.

4.2. Tools Used

Data collected through questionnaire (closed ended) was exported to a spreadsheet and transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 for analysis. Descriptive statistical techniques which included mean and standard deviation were used.

5. Data Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha test used applied to check the reliability of the Questionnaire. [Table 1]

Parameters	No. of Questions Related to Parameter	Cronbach's Alpha Value-Expectation	Cronbach's Alpha Value-Perception
Knowledge	7	0.818	0.762
Attitude	6	0.932	0.789
Skills	7	0.947	0.748

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Table 2 provides analysis of expectation of corporate from technical education in terms of knowledge by average mean and Standard deviation. The corporate expectation from technical education in terms of knowledge has a mean score of 4.1357 with the standard deviation of .63292. Out of the 7 variables "apart from having full time faculty, Institutes must involve corporate for more interaction

with the students" has the highest mean score of 4.55 and standard deviation of .826.whereas The minimum score for this variable is 2 i.e. "disagree" and maximum score is 5 i.e. strongly agree. The variables "technical education provides adequate exposure to real life work situations to students" and "Institute keeps pace with the industry in updating Curriculum" has the lowest mean score of 3.80 and the standard deviation of .894 and 1.322 respectively. The mean score of the expectation for the parameter knowledge is 4.1357 with the standard deviation of .63292. However the mean score of corporate expectation from technical institution with regard to knowledge is 4.1357, which indicates that knowledge aspect lies "slightly higher than agree level".

5.1. Variables Related to Corporate Expectation from Knowledge

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Technical education provides adequate exposure to real life work situations to students	20	2	5	3.80	.894
Institutes keep pace with the Industry in updating Curriculum	20	1	5	3.80	1.322
Major projects and summer training should be replaced by the live projects	20	2	5	4.20	.834
Duration of live projects should be for 6 months rather than 6 to 8 weeks	20	2	5	4.15	.745
Apart from having full time faculty, Institutes must involve corporate for more interaction with the students	20	2	5	4.55	.826
Regular interaction of students with industry personnel is being arranged through guest lectures	20	2	5	4.35	.813
Teachers and instructors need to be trained in Industry to enhance their skills in specialized areas	20	2	5	4.10	.852
Valid N (list wise)	20			4.1357	.63292

Table 2: Group Statistics- Knowledge

Table 3 provides an analysis of expectation of corporate from technical education in terms of attitude by average mean and Standard deviation The corporate expectation from technical education in terms of attitude has a mean score of 4.0417 with the standard deviation of 0.87637 .Out of the 6 variables "workplace ethics" has the highest mean score of 4.30 and standard deviation of 1.129. The variables "emotional intelligence" has the lowest mean score of 3.80 and the standard deviation of 0.894 and 1.322 respectively The minimum score for both the variables on likert scale is 2 i.e. "disagree" and maximum score is 5 i.e. strongly agree. However the mean score of corporate expectation from technical institution with regard to attitude is 4.0417, which indicates that attitude aspect lies "slightly higher than agree level".

5.2. Variables Related to Corporate Expectation from Attitude

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Displays readiness to explore and create opportunities	20	1	5	3.90	1.119
Self Confidence among students	20	3	5	4.10	.718
Willingness to learn	20	1	5	4.00	1.170
Emotional intelligence	20	1	5	3.80	.894
Workplace ethics	20	1	5	4.30	1.129
Professional commitment	20	1	5	4.15	1.089
Valid N (list wise)	20			4.0417	0.87637

Table 3: Group Statistics- Attitude

Table 4 provides an analysis of expectation of corporate from technical education in terms of skills by average mean and Standard deviation The corporate expectation from technical education in terms of skills has a mean score of 4.0929 with the standard deviation

of 0.84614.Out of the 7 variables "team work" has the highest mean score of 4.20 and standard deviation of 0.834. The variable "self management" has the lowest mean score of 4.00 and the standard deviation of 1.026. However the mean score of corporate expectation from technical institution with regard to skills is 4.0929, which indicates that skills aspect lies "slightly higher than agree level".

5.3. Variables Related to Corporate Expectation from Skills

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ability to cope with the uncertainty	20	1	5	4.10	.968
Ability to work under pressure	20	1	5	4.05	1.099
Self Management	20	1	5	4.00	1.026
Creativity	20	1	5	4.05	.945
Communication skills	20	2	5	4.15	.933
Team Work	20	2	5	4.20	.834
Leadership skills	20	1	5	4.10	.968
Valid N (list wise)	20			4.0929	0.84614

Table 4: Group Statistics- Skills

The researcher went a step further to find out the perceived satisfaction of corporate from the technical institutions. The analysis depicted that perceived satisfaction is very different from the expectation.

Table 5 provides an analysis of perceived satisfaction of corporate from technical education in terms of knowledge by average mean and Standard deviation. The perceived satisfaction of corporate sector from technical education in terms of knowledge has a mean score of 2.3786 with the standard deviation of 0.714198. Out of the 7 variables "apart from having full time faculty, institutes must involve corporate for more interaction with the students" has the highest mean score of 2.80 and standard deviation of 1.281. The variables "institute must keep pace with the industry in updating the curriculum and "major projects and summer training should be replaced with live project" have the lowest mean score of 2.20 with standard deviation of 1.152 and 0.894 respectively. However the mean score of perceived satisfaction of corporate from technical education with regard to knowledge is 2.3786, which indicates that knowledge aspect lies on "disagree level".

5.4. Variables Related to Corporate Perceived Satisfaction from Knowledge

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Technical education provides adequate exposure to real life work situations to students	20	1	5	2.30	1.174
Institutes keep pace with the Industry in updating Curriculum	20	1	4	2.20	1.152
Major projects and summer training should be replaced by the live projects	20	1	4	2.20	.894
Duration of live projects should be for 6 months rather than 6 to 8 weeks	20	1	4	2.25	1.118
Apart from having full time faculty, Institutes must involve corporate for more interaction with the students	20	1	5	2.80	1.281
Regular interaction of students with industry personnel is being arranged through guest lectures	20	1	5	2.65	1.182
Teachers and instructors need to be trained in Industry to enhance their skills in specialized areas	20	1	5	2.25	1.251
Valid N (list wise)	20			2.3786	0.714198

Table 5: Group Statistics-Knowledge

Table 6 provides an analysis of perceived satisfaction corporate from technical education in terms of attitude by average mean and Standard deviation. The perceived satisfaction of corporate sector from technical education in terms of attitude has a mean score of 2.4833 with the standard deviation of 0.84794. Out of the 6 variables "self confidence among the students" has the highest mean score of 2.45 and standard deviation of 0.945. The variables "emotional intelligence" has the lowest mean score of 1.85 with standard deviation of 0.988. However the mean score of perceived satisfaction of corporate from technical education with regard to attitude is 2.4833, which indicates that attitude aspect lies on "disagree level".

5.5. Variables Related to Corporate Perceived Satisfaction from Attitude

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Displays readiness to explore and create opportunities	20	1	4	2.00	1.026
Self Confidence among students	20	1	4	2.45	.945
Willingness to learn	20	1	4	2.20	1.056
Emotional intelligence	20	1	5	1.95	1.146
Workplace ethics	20	1	4	1.85	.988
Professional commitment	20	1	4	2.20	1.056
Valid N (list wise)	20			2.4833	0.84794

Table 6: Group Statistics-Attitude

Table 7 provides an analysis of perceived satisfaction of corporate from technical education in terms of skills by average mean and Standard deviation .The perceived satisfaction of corporate sector from technical education in terms of skills has a mean score of 2.2786 with the standard deviation of 0.70517. Out of the 7 variables "communication skills" has the highest mean score of 2.40 and standard deviation of 1.046. The variables "ability to cope with the uncertainty" and "self management" has the lowest mean score of 2.10 with standard deviation of 0.852 and 1.294 respectively. However the mean score of perceived satisfaction of corporate from technical education with regard to skills is 2.2786, which indicates that attitude aspect lies on "disagree level".

5.6. Variables Related to Corporate Perceived Satisfaction from Skills

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ability to cope with the uncertainty	20	1	4	2.10	.852
Ability to work under pressure	20	1	5	2.35	1.040
Self Management	20	1	5	2.10	1.294
Creativity	20	1	5	2.35	1.137
Communication skills	20	1	4	2.40	1.046
Team Work	20	1	4	2.35	1.040
Leadership skills	20	1	5	2.30	1.342
Valid N (list wise)	20			2.2786	0.70517

Table 7: Group Statistics –Skills

Analyzing the mean score of various parameters, it is seen that corporate expectation from technical education in terms of providing knowledge to the students has the highest mean score i.e. 4.1357, followed by skills with 4.0929 and attitude with 4.0417. [Refer Table 2, 3 and 4]

On analyzing the perceived satisfaction of the corporate from technical education it is seen that attitude has the highest mean score i.e. 2.483, knowledge with 2.3786 and Skills with 2.2786.[Refer Table 5,6 and 7]. The mean score on likert scale indicate that perceived satisfaction on all the 3 parameters lie on disagree level, which means that corporate satisfaction from the technical education in Madhya Pradesh is far below their expectation.

6. Findings
Corporate expectation from the technical education was analyzed on the basis of questionnaire, telephonic interviews, discussion and interaction with the placement officers. Analysis of both the expectation and perceived satisfaction revealed that there was a huge difference in the expectation and the perceived satisfaction level from these technical institutions.
The gap between the expectation and perceived satisfaction for the parameter knowledge is 1.76 (mean score) which means a lot of work needs to be done from the Institution end.
The study revealed that expectation regarding the delivery of the subject knowledge was given the utmost importance. Industry views that the curriculum must be framed keeping in mind the course for which the student is enrolled. Involvement of the people from industry is a must while designing the curriculum so that they can give their inputs. Industry also feels that faculty members should be exposed to the industry atmosphere which will enhance their teaching skills and will be helpful in imparting more of the practical

knowledge to the students. The major gap between the expectation and perceived satisfaction was seen for replacement of summer training and major projects by the live projects.

The attitude with which a student enters the corporate world and works in an Industry depends a lot on how well he has been groomed for it by the institution. The study revealed that major gap between the expectation and perceived satisfaction was seen for the workplace ethics among the students. The environment of the institution is entirely different from the place he/she works. The workplace ethics differ from place to place. There is no doubt that institutions implement the workplace ethics but students do not take that seriously which later on reflects on their jobs. The study disclosed that students entering the industry find it difficult to adjust in the initial days as they are not used to moral codes. The industry also feels that the students lack the professional commitment and the emotional intelligence. Though the willingness to learn and self confidence reflects a positive side, the industry feels that institutions must encash on such qualities of the students from the beginning of the course and work on them.

Of the three parameters Knowledge, Attitude and skills, the major gap between the expectation and perceived satisfaction was seen for skills (Mean score 1.82). The industry feels that there is a lot of scope for improvement in terms of improving the skills of the students. Ability to cope with the uncertainty, ability to work under pressure, team work, leadership skills etc were some basic skills where the corporate sector was most disappointed with the technical institutions. Though it is seen that now a days institutions try to inbuilt such qualities in the students through cultural festivals, management game etc but the level at which such qualities are required in the industry were disappointing. Perhaps the main reason behind this could be that, in the institution, the students choose their own team to work with. Also the pressure to complete the task is bearable, as the onus does not lie on them whereas, when the same student enters the industry, he/she is responsible for the task given to him/her. Also the formation of the team is the work of the senior people and not the student. Therefore, the corporate feels that such basic skills should be taught to the students from the beginning of the course and should continue till the completion of the programme.

7. Suggestions

To fulfill the corporate expectation, technical institutions must create programmes which will enhance the qualities in the students viz quick decision making capabilities, problem solving capabilities, ability to work under pressure, thinking out of box, success oriented, to remain positive under any circumstances, punctuality and discipline, self management, ethical values etc. Special and compulsory classes should be arranged from the beginning of the course.

To enhance the subject knowledge of the students, due focus should be given. If required, industry people having expertise in the subject must be involved. Short term courses must be handled by the industry people so that practical aspects can be understood.

Special attention must be given towards the major projects and summer training. Many students were in favor of replacing the summer training and major projects with live projects.

Technical institutions must tie up with the corporate sector by creating MOU's. Since it is not possible for every institution, the major projects and summer training should be closely monitored. Topics for summer training and major projects must be decided well in advance along with the students. Mid term evaluation of the summer training should be conducted by the institution. During such evaluation, the industry person who is involved with the students must be invited. Duration of the summer training must be increased from 8 weeks as it will give the students a better understanding of the organization and the work.

To motivate the students to take internship and project work seriously, institutions must try to arrange paid internship.

Institutions must start in-house project development centers which should be collaborative efforts from the institution and industry both. Apart from this, institution and industry must join hands to create professionals with global mindset so that they can adjust in different cultural and social settings.

Institutions must try to find the need of the companies hiring the technical students and then prepare the students accordingly.

8. Conclusion

To sum up, Technical education has a great importance throughout the world and the increased demand for technical graduates is resulting in increased number of technical institution establishment. Technical education can give them the edge they need. Technical education contributes substantially to the socio economic development of the country as a whole. But during recent times, it is seen that technical institutions have lost their way. Institutions are treating students as their customers thus, compromising on their values. The situation is no different in the state of Madhya Pradesh. They are contending not only within their own state, but also with the technical institutions of other states of the country.

To make students employable, institution need to understand the expectation of the corporate so that they can mould the students consequently. Institutions must frame an independent committee comprising of members from educational as well as from industrial sector to ensure quality in education. Apart from that, industry must clearly indicate the technical institutions as to what they need in the students so that students can be prepared accordingly. Students must also give their best. They need to understand that they have a long way to go. To get that extra mileage, they need to focus skill building activities as most of the expectations can be met by sustained efforts from themselves.

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