Employability Skills In Higher Educational Institutions: Perspectives From Rural India

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ABSTRACT:

The study takes a conceptual review of the employability skills of graduates form Higher educational institutions in India and contrasts it with the rural educational Institutions in India. The existing literature on the theme is extensively reviewed in the study and its association with the rural institutions is extensively examined. The study is able to identify the extent of division in the urban and rural educational institutions on a variety of aspects concerning the employment skills of the graduate. The perception and the experience of the researcher has been extensively included in the research and the study is able to identify the gaps that the rural institutions in India have to fill-in in order to impart the employability skills amongst the student. The study is an effort to identify the shortcoming in the context of the employability skills in Higher education institutions.

KEY WORDS:

Education quality, Employability Skills, Rural Higher education Institutions,

INTRODUCTION:

The basic needs of the any individual are food, shelter and cloth, state asphysiological needs in Abraham Maslow Theory. But nowadays Education is also considered as basic need of every individual. Government also provideselementary education at free of cost. Right to education is one of the fundamental rightsprovided in constitution under part III, Article 30.Every individual has a right to take education as is stated in the Constitution of India.

Education is the universal remedy for all problems. To impart quality education to the society is primarily the responsibility of the government. Education plays a significant role in the development of humanbeing;it also improves state of living, solves financial problems, and also contributes to development of society.In a study conducted by International Federation of Accountants (1996), Adler R.W. and Milne M.J. (1997) and Albrecht W.S. and Sack R.J.(2000), it was discovered that any education system mainly focuses on technical knowledge and procedural application, which itself is not sufficient for employment. The education system should also emphasize on the learning strategies to improve generic skills such as case-studies, industry based assignments, work-integrated learning, research based learning and simulations/role plays.In a study conducted by the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum (1992), nine principles of good practice for students learning and better performance in the real world can be

considered as hallmark of a good assessment program rather than only theoretical knowledge being imparted in the educational institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education is pivotal for enabling and economic advancement in any society as it strengthens individual or society to achieve its economic goals. Kokane(2010)Education is the only key to liberate an individual from poverty which also contributes to growth of the individual and family (Sivakumar & Sarvalingam, 2010); it is an essentialmeans forcountry'sexpansionas well as creation of awealthycivilization. Education can provide opportunities,challenges to the individual to discover his own distinctive way of creating the ecosystem for growth, and also increating opportunities for self-fulfillment (Barskay, 1998). Education can felicitate revolutionary changes in multiple dimensions such as social, political, cultural and economic developments of a country; it plays a vital role for the development of nation (Padmini, 2012).Government has a duty to be concerned about education for the development and inbringing about positive changes in country's assets(Rahman, &Uddin, 2009).

India is a fast growing and developing country of the world.Knowledge, creativityand Skilled Human resourcesare essential for the progress of anydeveloping countries like India. Today's economy is a knowledge driven economy, in this knowledge era education plays a significant role in economic growth, and India has third world largest university density next only to China and USA, which indicates the need and desire for eduction in the developing nations like india.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS:

Employability relates to a person's ability to gain employment. It is also expressed as work readiness. It is an assessmentbenchmark not only for graduates but also all the human being as a whole. The country with better employability rate seems to be socially as well as economically sound than others.As (Mason, G., et. al., 2006) state in their research, employability refers to work-readiness, possession of the commercial understanding of business along with knowledge, skills and attitude that will assist a fresher in making dynamic contributions to the organizational goals.

Skills that graduates need to survive in employment market to succeed their livelihood throughout their life (Harvey and Morey, 2003).An amalgamation of an individual's ability, knowledge, capabilities, competencies, as well as derivation of skills settled as Employability skills (Nirmala, K. &kumar, S. A., 2018) that empowers one to get employed, become successful in their career path, and move up the career ladder, by establishing and attaining goals.

Employability skills, in the words of Buck and Barrick (1987) arethe non-technical proficiencies of workforce that be treated as assets by the employer. The study states that personal qualities, academic skills and higher order thinking are collectively called as employability skills. Another study by (Robinson, 2002).Sherer and Eadie, (1987) states that, skills sets which are valued by all the industries at any position in the hierarchy commencing from the top management to front line staff at the point of entry can be termed as Employability Skills.According to Wesselink et al.,(2009), Businessprofessionalsexplained that forachievements in place of work,student musthold entry level employability skills to succeed in the employment. These skills are often seen as foremostvital raw materialfor career success of any employee.

ISSUES FACED BY RURAL STUDENTS':

INFRASTRUCTURE:

The learning environment plays a vital role in the growth of students; it has a major role to play in learning outcomes also helps to determine their academic performance of students. A lot of colleges in rural India have poor infrastructure which affects the students learning. The primary constraints are Poor government funding, Lack of resources at the institution such as proper building for colleges, Classroom for study,poor quality of seating, non-availability of blackboards, improper sanitation facilities, separate lavatories for girls and boys etc.In terms of learning resources non-availability ofbooks, supplies, stationary, library and reading rooms as well as necessary, study materials are some of the perennial problems in rural institutions.Non-availability of Laboratories for experiments, tools, equipment's are also a major impediments in terms of infrastructure.The recreational infrastructure such as playground for sports, and sports equipment are also severely lacking in the rural Institutions. Theavailability of hostels and good quality residential facilities are also proving to be a bigger hurdle in the rural institutions. The non-availability of canteen facilities for provision of quality food orof drinking water has also been a prominent problem in the rural institutions.Supply of electricity, electrical installations such as fans, lighting, ventilation are of poor standards. The usage of technology related resourcessuchas computers, printers, scanning facilities as well as internet access Wi-Fi and multimedia facilities such audio-visual aids for presentation and demonstration, LCD projectors for enhancing the study environment. Transportation facilities to and fro the Institutions are also inadequate in the rural Institutions.In this Twenty first century, for sustenance and developmentof quality higher education, improving the infrastructure shall be the primary duties of the government and Society as a whole.

According toFourie (2006), therestands two forms of infrastructure corresponding to economic and social infrastructure distinguished by Economists and urban planners. For instanceelectricity, telecommunications, train tracks, roads and highways, airports and sea ports, water supply and sanitation falls under economic infrastructure. Whereas, schools, colleges, libraries, universities, clinics, hospitals, courts, museums, theatres, playgrounds, parks, fountains and statues falls under social infrastructure. Furthermore social infrastructureinfluence to the welfare of society, stimulate cultural standards, education and health of every human being.

According to World Bank report (2004), infrastructure is ordinarily agreed as ultimate communal infrastructure which granges the grounds for society and economics. Banyte (2008) scrutinize that, infrastructure as a factor can regulates effective transmission and adoption of revolution in the society.

Education and health are the chief components of social infrastructure which promote quality of life through better utilization of human capital and physical infrastructure by this means improving standard of living which prosperous economic growth of country (Hall and Jones 1999; De and Ghosh 2003). Endogenous growth theory, says that poor physical infrastructure and human resources can coerce economic growth of country (Mankiw, N. G., Romer, D. and Weil, D. N., 1992).

LACK OF QUALITY EDUCATION:

Education quality is must not only for the growth of students; it also has influence on society's development. According to research (Williams, 1996), quality education depicts capabilities and status of graduates.The success in the workplace of any graduate is not fully dependent on his specific degree but is more dependent on the generic skills acquired by that graduate (Harvey L. 1999).Another study of Hughes K. L. and Moore D.T. (1999) revealed that student's job knowledge and skills improve the attitude and behavior towards the work readiness.

A study conducted by Crebert G., Bates M., Bell B., Patrick C.J., and Cragnolini V. (2004), revealed that generic skills along with disciplinary knowledge is important for workplace application. Only disciplinary knowledge does not guarantee employment.Another study by Asbaugh H. and Johnstone K.M. (2000), Crebert G. (2002) and Kavanagh M. and Drennen L. (2008), the balance and mix of generic, technical and professional skills should be built into degree programs. Considering the facts stated above the rural population in India have very little access to quality education. The reasons are several and widespread. The teachers are not skilled and their competencies and ability to impart education are never tested except during their initial recruitment. The teachers are not encouraged to acquire new skills and they lack self-motivation to learn on their own. The opportunities are also limited in the context of educational institutions in the rural areas.

POOR TEACHER'S QUALITY:

Several Studies show that "teacher quality" is the basicprinciple in student enactment. A teacher has been considered as an asset for institution who gives their contribution to society by educating students for future. As the saying goes, "A Teacher is a Friend, a Philosopher and a Guide". High quality teachers are asset for the country as they moulda student's personality. "Teachers quality" is the greatest determining factor of education quality (Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain 2005; Rockoff 2004).Teacher's characteristics such as educational background, experience, leadership, perseverance, preparedness for course work and teacher evaluation score significantly affect students'performance; theseare the variables that must be paid much attention by the teacher to enhance a student's achievement.

The major problem faced by the rural India is poor teaching skill of teacher at government colleges and schools.Teachers are not ready to go to rural areas for teaching, because of poor salary and facilities in the villages.Most of the efficient teachers are engaged by the private colleges and the government colleges do not attract these talented teachers for a variety of reasons. (Kane, Rockoff, Staiger, 2008).The superior facilities in the urban areas such as good infrastructure and transportation facilities, housing and better environment for their wards attract the teachers towards the urban centers .

POOR STUDENTS SKILLS:

The major variables that effect students' performance while learning are Parental education, family size and family income (Coleman et al., 1966). In another study byHanushek (1981, 1989, and 1992) it was concluded that student's family significantly affects a student's achievement. The study reported that family education background has a significantly strong correlation with the student's achievement. Students who come from weak educational background if are mixed with others who have strong educational background, are likely to registerincrease achievement. Many studies such as D'Amico, Matthes,Sankar, Merchant &Zurita, (1996); Lichter, Roscigno&Condron, (2003);National Research Council, (1993), state that there is a lack of academic success among rural students' as compared to urban students; rural students are at risk of depleted success due to low motivation levels.

Students from villages and remote towns are most likely to be affected due to their their financial conditions. These students could not afford the fees of colleges, cannot buy books for study or minimumstationary items.Their parents don't have fixed jobs; mostly they are agriculturallabors who depend on meager income. Such familieswork as farm labours of other land owners on a daily wage and earnmoney only enough to feed their families.Most of the students from such families quit their education, because of increased family responsibility on them. They cannot devote time for their study, and most drop out of their school as soon as they become competent to serve as labours.As a result thetdon'thave any career goals and objective in their lifeand are hence depreived of opportunities in future too.

Rural students may face a number of roadblocks when it comes to accessing and succeeding in higher education, but colleges and universities can make small adjustments that would help them overcome these challenges (Susan Elkins, 2014).

LOW INDUSTRY EXPOSURE:

FTI Survey (2006), Commissioned by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), it finds that two important things - workplaces skills and knowledge can be enhanced by educational institution by giving suitable training to the students. Kavanagh M. and Drennen L. (2008), in their study found that along with technical skill the professional skills such as business awareness and real world knowledge are essential at workplace. In a study of Crebert G. (2004) found that, pre-placement training for students helps them to cope up with the work place environment.

Industries are not ready to acquire their work force form smaller towns and villages through campus recruitment due to non-availability of skilled students for placement. Employersneed a skilled workforce for their organization they need higher competencies amongst their employees in order to their fulfill organization obligations.Technical education is must for employability or placement of students, having soft skill which serves additional benefit for students in his career.

In rural areas the educational institutions fail to provide the much needed industrial exposure to their students. The practical exposure is also missing in theircurriculum;such institutions can only provide theoretical knowledge with less and less coverage of skills in their curriculum.Skill development of their students is a rare thing. Organizing skills development trainings in the form of workshops for their students do not figure amongst their priority despite support from several government agencies. They follow traditional pattern for their curriculum which obviously does not achieve the intended outcomes and hence fail to attract industries in their campuses.

NON AVAILABILITY OF INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Internships and Project helps in application of concepts and acquire skills while building the capacity to of systematic study of factualquestions or a problem (Shivkumar, M &Prakash, M, 2001); practicum and internship training are the two most common practices of experimental and experiential learning (Eyler, 2009);Practical and internships are the symbol of critical replication, and professional growth through active learning by undertaking supervisedwork experiences(Gavigan, 2010; O'Neil, 2010).According to Association for Experiential Education, (2011) report, Graduates can attain intellectual objectives through practical and internships over an extensive series of academic activities, (Eyler& Giles, 1999; Eyler 2009). Practical and Internship contribute to discipline-related knowledge and skills (Aldas et al., 2010). In a study it was found that, students' capability to incorporate theory into practice is the major strength of an internship (Farkas, 2005). Practical learning is transformative. The foremost advantage from internship is the transformation of student knowledge in practice (Gavigan, 2010). Practical learning is a valuable technique since that leads to nurturing students' career as well as personal and professional development (Kolb, 1984; Eyler& Giles, 1999).

American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation, (2005), state that practicum introduce to students to fieldwork in work setting, whereas internship provide advance training to graduates related to field work and permit them to gain extensive real-world experience.According to study by Hutz, Gomes, & McCarthy, (2006); Stone & McLaren, (1999); Von Dras& Miller, (2002), they revealed that Fieldwork assists students achieve learning goals also provide real world knowledge of business and workplace. Students can articulate new attitudes, skills, knowledge by applying discipline-related

knowledge into practice that lead to possible alterations in student's personality in terms of civic values, personal as well as professional development. (Eyler& Giles,1999). The urban areas are endowed with many forms of organizations both government and private, this helps the students from urban centers in acquiring practical skills by taking up internships in these organizations. In the rural parts of the country, these industries and organizations are few and isolated; this deprives the students in the rural areas from acquiring internships and on job training thus seriously causing a handicap in developing of practical skills.

CONCLUSION:

This study indicates the wide level of deficiency found in the rural higher educational institutions in India and the areas in which such deficiencies exist. The study identifies Poor quality of teachers, Infrastructural inadequacies, non-availability of internships and practical exposure to the students. At the back of these reasons is the socio-economic background of the rural population. The factors that play a significant role in the achieving the economic development of the nations and non-availability of skilled work force in the country is because of the deprivation of the rural masses in the country, which forms a large majority of the Indian Populace. Hence it is indeed very vital to initiate swift and efficient measures for providing employability skills to the students acquiring education in higher educational institutions in rural areas of the country.

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