

**Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability  
Skills Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis**

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**Abstract-**

*Higher Education especially professional course in India is changing rapidly to meet the pace of global competition.. In the changing environment and challenging economic order, the management graduates need to get exposed to job related skills along with other desires skills such as Personality and life skills besides mastering the domain knowledge. Majority of universities and institutions of higher learning both in public and private sectors are falling short in providing the required Skills. Therefore, the innovative strategies like life skills, personality skills, leadership skills, soft skills and other job oriented skills needs to be developed among the new age graduates. In addition to this an industry oriented Internship, Experiential Learning, Field Research, Twinning Program (Student Exchange program) may help graduates to acquire the desired skills and they may be made part and parcel of the curricula.*

*The present study conducted a survey by selecting 235 graduate student respondents in the city of Bangalore revealed that majority students expect through change in the present curricula. Further 86% of respondents preferred compulsory internship in the IV semester of Master's Degree Program and 68% felt the need for optional internship in the VI semester of Bachelor Degree Program. Regarding Experiential learning 65% of the respondents agreed that the students of the Business Education shall be given with marketing Test and other problem solving models at the field to enhance the employability. The students of the MBA & MFM, MDP unanimously vouched for introduction of twinning programs in their respective branch of study.*

**Keywords:** Education, Employability, Job & Soft Skills, Competency, innovative strategies

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education can hold a key role not only finding a job, but also landing one that offers both financial and intrinsic rewards. Education can affect both the breadth and depth of jobs available like broader range of jobs, higher pays and quicker chances for upper mobility and not the least it protects against unemployment. Especially Higher education also provides greater protection against job loss and greater ability to find new work during slow economic periods. Even the organizations are in search of better candidates having higher educational qualification along with needed job and soft skills which makes them readily employable and fit into any kind of job and display higher productivity with higher efficiency through education and experience would get a better job, but to be successful at the job one needs to exhibit a mix of skills called as 'Employability skills'. For employers, getting the right people means identifying people with the right skills and qualities to fulfill the role and contribute to the organization's success the role and contribute to the organizations Candidates may have the qualifications and hard skills needed to be able to manage the job role but without a well-toned set of 'soft skills' employers are less inclined to hire.

Taking the concept of Business Graduates the skills needed by them should be well toned and polished in such a manner that matches any problem solving situation, decision making aspect, handling conflicts & disputes, motivating human resource, guidance & direction to the subordinate or colleagues, handling change resistance, bringing about organizational interventions or anything for that matter has to be managed properly and efficiently so that expected result is accomplished.

In order to get sufficient knowledge and skills the business graduates have to learn such skills that are needed to be learnt or to be incorporated in their curricula. The universities or the educational institutions have to plan the curricula in such a manner that they include both theoretical concept and practical aspect of theoretical concept in the real situations needs to be trained. They can take in any form like Field Work, Role Play, Experiential Learning, Internship and twinning programs that would give exactly a practical experience and would help in preparing the candidates to effectively perform on the job floor. Even the employer would be benefited as they are getting a talented and competent work force with less amount of cost spent only on recruitment and selection of the right employee for the right job in the right time. If not the cost has incurred on the training and development of employees who needs to be motivated, directed and guided at every step.

# Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability Skill Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis[10-16]

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## 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In a slow growing economy the employer is not ready to spend large amount of money on induction, training and development. Instead they want to hire readily employable candidates from various institutions of higher education. Unfortunately, the curriculum of majority of the universities and institutions in India are not up to the level of Industry expectations. More ICT enabled teaching which claim to be innovative is not giving any scope for Employability because ICT has become a way of life. There is an urgent need on the part of educationalist to introduce innovative strategies in providing required employability skills to the graduates passing out and seeing employment.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study tried to attempt to review the latest literature available to find out the research gaps. Some of the important literatures related are reviewed for the purpose.

**Smith et al. (2014)** highlights the problems in employability observing that the absence of clear conceptualization and theoretical control over employability since there is no agreement about a universal employability. The politicization of the construct due to various parties with different interests all trying to include their favorite sub-concepts has not helped the above conceptualization process. The generality of the employability concept require every skill, ability, capability, psycho-social attitude identified to be assimilated. Employability is presented as the “ability of graduates to start their work as effective professional employees from first day of employment” and employability appears to be an explicit outcome of national higher education systems of many of the countries. The concept of employability is enormously helpful to generalists and semi-professional degree holders to be clear about their forthcoming work.

**Morrison (2013)** highlighting that degrees offer manageable skills which provides future employability in business and finance. Students are encouraged to develop out-and-out employability which is considered more important. The study reveals that staff perceptions play an important role in the stimulus of social class, gender, and race on employability. It is stated that with collective pressure on higher education systems lecturers are obliged to deliver employability focused curricula. Further detailed research is needed to understand the perceptions of the staff members towards employability and their measurements in university education.

**Baum and Locke (2011)** opines that, entrepreneurial skill includes the pioneering ability to create a exclusive business plan, capability to acquire the finance for his own venture, formation of the Management team and procurement of facilities and paraphernalia in an competent and operative manner.

**Rubin and Dierdorff (2009)** define the curriculum of business management course frequently fails to provide managerial skill which an MBA graduate is expected to apply in real life problem solving cases. In some extreme cases, it becomes an acceptability crisis or significance problem for the Management Institutions. As a result, the institutions started to drop their professional credibility which is being reflected in the form of reduced number of treads by the new entrants. Employability of the MBA students should not be confined only for the fresher.

**Pool and Sewell (2007)** stated and define that employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more possible to choose and secure occupations in which they can be highly satisfied and most successful.

The above literature review shows that there are very few studies carried out to understand the gap between industry requirement and the graduate’s employability skills. Hence, the present study makes an attempt to understand the perception of graduates about the curriculum design of the institutions offering various programmes in Bangalore city.

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The concept of liberalization, globalization and privatization has turned the global economy into an industrial economy where in every minute there is a new innovation in technology, production process, and innovation in substitution of raw materials, new business models, organizational structures, innovative management thinking, and competent human resources to handle any uncertain situations. Hence every organization has to focus on the survival and growth of the organization and to stay competent in the global market. This can be done only by competent human resources out of other factors of production. Thus all organizations concentrate on getting well talented and skilled employees having sufficient skills of employability. Thus all the educated candidates or prospective qualified candidates should concentrate on their all-round personality development including

# **Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability Skill Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis[10-16]**

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various skills like communication skills, hard skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, human resource management skills, conflict handling and other skills that are needed to be successful at the job.

#### **4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study is undertaken on the graduates passing out from the courses namely MBA, BBA, BCA and B.Com of Bangalore city. A method of random sampling is applied and the data is collected from the respondents at random. The study will help us to know the perception of the passed out students in search of potential jobs and on the other hand the head hunts done by the management of various organizations in search of competent Human Resources. This study would help us to know about the need for Employability Skills to fight the competition in the present scenario.

#### **5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study the lacunae in the present systems of higher education with reference to employability skills
- To identify the various modes of brining employability skills into the curriculum
- To study the perceptions of graduate students about innovative strategies for improving the employability skills
- To suggest measures in improving the employability skills among graduates of different streams of education.

#### **6. METHODOLOGY**

The research paper is based on Descriptive Exploratory Research the sample size taken is 235 students and the area is Bangalore City. Analysis of findings of demographic analysis of employability of business graduates study in Bangalore City.

##### **Statistical Tools**

The data collected from various sources were analyzed by applying appropriate mathematical and statistical techniques along with percentage analysis. Analysis of test by descriptive test and independent sample test are used with the help of SPSS 20.

##### **Primary Data**

Primary data is one which is collected specifically for the purpose of the research and can be obtained from various people working in the organization. For this study the primary data was collected from questionnaire and discussion with job holders

##### **Secondary Data**

For this study the secondary data was collected from the books related to human resources management and organizational behavior, published and unpublished documents and related websites

#### **7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- The study covers only on 235 graduates of different streams covering institutions located in and around Bangalore city. Hence, may not be generalized.

#### **8. DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

**Frequency Table 1: Gender Distribution**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	153	65.10
Female	82	34.90
Total	235	100.00

**Source: Primary Data – Survey**

This table evaluates the gender of the respondents. Sample size is 235. Male 153 respondents and female 82 respondents.

## Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability Skill Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis[10-16]

**Frequency Table 2: Educational Qualification**

Education	Frequency	Percentage
MBA	77	32.80
BBA	41	17.4
BCA	48	20.40
B.Com	69	29.40
Total	235	100.00

**Source: Primary Data – Survey**

This table has been clearly showing the educational qualification of the respondents. All respondents are students. Pursuing MBA, BBA, BCA, B.Com graduates in the city of Bengaluru

### 10. RESPONDENTS PERCEPTIONAL ANALYSIS

1. There is a need for extra competency skill to beat the competition.
2. Soft skills are equally important to hard skills at the Job floor.
3. Business Graduates face more competition in getting Jobs than other professional courses
4. Business graduates need to express their ability at the time of interview
5. Employability skills procures better jobs
6. Employers look for candidates who can communicate both in verbal and in written
7. Interpersonal skills are needed for better organizational climate
8. Employers have more choice of applicants and will favour those with well-rounded employability skills.
9. Employability skills go beyond the education and qualifications
10. Employability skills will help in adapt successfully in changing situations and environments
11. Curricula should accommodate for practical knowledge as the concept of on the job training which familiarize the job floor
12. Courses should provide for Internship to get practical experience.
13. Field work and experiential learning is felt as a dire need to acquire sufficient employability skills

**Table 3: Perceptual Analysis**

	SA	%	A	%	NS	%	D	%	SD	%
s1	125	53.2	98	41.71	2	0.86	4	1.71	6	2.56
s2	82	34.9	105	44.69	6	2.56	21	8.94	21	8.94
s3	36	15.32	39	16.6	10	4.26	72	30.64	78	33.2
s4	99	42.13	88	37.45	2	0.86	24	10.22	22	9.37
s5	123	52.35	110	46.81	1	0.43	1	0.43	0	0
s6	89	37.88	116	49.37	9	3.83	13	5.54	8	3.41
s7	81	34.47	93	39.58	11	4.69	26	11.07	24	10.22
s8	97	41.28	113	48.09	6	2.56	11	4.69	8	3.41
s9	81	34.47	89	37.88	15	6.39	35	14.9	15	6.39
s10	65	27.66	78	33.2	9	3.83	45	19.15	38	16.18
s11	64	27.24	80	34.05	30	12.77	36	15.32	25	10.64
s12	99	42.13	85	36.18	8	3.41	23	9.79	20	8.52
s13	84	35.75	106	45.11	7	2.98	16	6.81	22	9.37

**Source: Primary Data – Survey**

Note: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, N S – Not Sure, D – Disagree, SD – Strongly Disagree

## Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability Skill Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis[10-16]

<b>Table 4: Descriptive Statistics</b>					
<b>Factors</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Gender of the respondents	235	1.00	2.00	1.3489	.47765
Education of the respondents	235	1.00	4.00	2.4638	1.22377
Soft skills are equally important to hard skills at the Job floor	235	1.00	5.00	2.1234	1.23590
Employability skills go beyond the education and qualifications	235	1.00	5.00	2.2085	1.24170
Curricula should accommodate for practical knowledge to familiarize the job floor	235	1.00	5.00	2.4809	1.32152
Valid N (listwise)	235				

The group statistics shown in Table 4 reveals that for Innovative strategies in increasing employability of Business Graduates have great influence on soft skills are equally important in job. Gender of the respondents mean value is 1.3489; education of the respondents mean value is 2.4638. The factor which influences education and soft skills and employee curricula is equally important for innovative strategies in business education.

In Table 5 the Levene's test for equality of variances below has a probability .842 which is greater than .05. Hence, it can assume that population variance is relatively equal. To test if the difference is statistically significant or not table 5 reveals that null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected because  $p > .05$  which is .921 with difference (116) and value of t is .099.

In Table 5 the Levene's test for equality of variances below has a probability .335 which is greater than .05. Hence it can assume that population variance is relatively equal. To test if the difference is statistically significant or not table 5 reveals that null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected because  $p > .05$  which is .453 with difference (116) and value of t is .754.

In Table 5 the Levene's test for equality of variances below has a probability .286 which is greater than .05. Hence, it can assume that population variance is relatively equal. To test if the difference is statistically significant or not table 5 reveals that null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected because  $p > .05$  which is .535 with difference (116) and value of t is .623.

In Table 5 the Levene's test for equality of variances below has a probability .345 which is greater than .05. Hence, it can assume that population variance is relatively equal. To test if the difference is statistically significant or not table 5 reveals that null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected because  $p > .05$  which is .973 with difference (116) and value of t is .034.

### 11. SUGGESTIONS

- Employability skills are very important for the betterment of the organization as the organizations are going to hire the competent employees who would match rightly to job. Hence curricula of the educational system should implement certain important employability skills like problem solving, soft skills, decision making.
- There should be more scope for practical and field experiences as part of curricula so that the business graduates get sufficient exposure at the education level and would become better performers at job floors.
- From the organization point of view the investment in training and development, organizational development and career development can be reduced as the business graduates come prepared for their personal and organizational growth
- Business graduates belonging to graduation level expect more changes in their curricula related to employability skills as most of them end their education journey and get into jobs or occupations to meet their day to day needs.
- Organizational goals and individual goals are accomplished at a faster rate the human resources recruited are competent enough to meet any challenging situations.

**Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability  
Skill Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis[10-16]**

**Table 5: Independent Sample Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
gender of the respondents	.040	.842	.099	116	.921	.00919	.09284	-.17470	.19307
			.099	81.772	.921	.00919	.09283	-.17549	.19386
Soft skills are equally important to hard skills at the Job floor	.935	.335	-.772	116	.442	-.18879	.24459	-.67322	.29564
			-.754	76.568	.453	-.18879	.25032	-.68728	.30971
Employability skills go beyond the education and qualifications	1.149	.286	.608	116	.544	.15394	.25302	-.34720	.65509
			.623	87.352	.535	.15394	.24714	-.33724	.64513
Curricula should accommodate for practical knowledge as the concept of on the job training which familiarize the job floor	.900	.345	-.035	116	.972	-.00887	.25593	-.51578	.49804
			-.034	75.878	.973	-.00887	.26278	-.53226	.51453

**12. CONCLUSIONS**

Various factors have been identified to have influenced soft skills are equally important in innovative strategies in business education. After analyzing them with the help of factor analysis it was conducted that inter – item correlation though not very high but it is positive for all items. Some items also negative correlation. The factors were subjected to principal component analysis using SPSS 20.0. Finally four factors comprising thirteen items, all for values of unity and above were extracted. Final four factors selected based on the innovative strategies of employability in business education. Here innovative strategies means business graduates should have sufficient practical experiences, field surveys internship twining programs in their curriculum so that output can be a competent business graduate having sufficient employability skills.

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## Curriculum of Higher Educational Institutions in India and Employability Skill Among Graduates: A Gap Analysis[10-16]

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