

PRIVATE VS GOVERNMENT UNIVERSITIES: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract

The journey from education to employment is a complicated one, there are multiple routes but a youth gets lost along the way. There are multiple questions that arise in the mind like education from where? Which universities – private, public, autonomous, deemed, distance, foreign universities, etc. – are better? How to get a good job? Which degree? What skills? What does an employer want? What works in moving young people from educational institutions to employment? These are some crucial questions to which every student wants a clear answer and this paper is an attempt in proposing one.

Introduction

In the current economic environment one of the biggest problems Generation Y is facing is of rising unemployment or underemployment. At the global level two kinds of crisis prevail—that of joblessness and shortage of skills. The youth today is in search of better education which can be a support factor in bridging the gap between their degrees and employability.

In the present education system the numbers of private, autonomous and deemed universities are increasing. It has triggered a debate upon whether education from private universities is more valuable than education from public sector. The confusion that arises in the mind of most students is of making a choice between a private university and a government university for value education and acquiring professional degrees. The Indian education system is still unable to help people match their educational preparation with their career ambition.

This paper is an attempt to make a comparison between quality education provided by private and government universities. For general comparison, a selected group of top universities in Jaipur is studied in order to find an answer to the question: whether private universities are putting in more efforts to ensure employability or government universities. Although it can never be a clearcut decision as to whether a university is good or bad, if one wants to judge any university the best way would be to check its richness in terms of faculty profile, infrastructure, laboratory, library, career profile of graduated students, the contribution of the university in research and development, meaningful seminars, and opportunities given to students to improve themselves so that they attain international viability post their qualification.

The gross enrolment ratio in higher studies in Rajasthan has touched 22.4%, which is higher than the national average; but employability percentage is far below many states. Therefore, the second part of the paper revolves around finding answers to what an employer wants from fresh candidates and raises the question whether we can develop a system of education which is closer to the work environment. This paper endeavors to bring into focus research bodies that can help design a system which can bridge the gap between education and employability and reveal some authentic data that could help the youth in making a sound choice.

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Main Text and Findings

The prime motive of this paper is to enable a student in making a choice of a university, for acquiring meaningful degrees. This comparative study brought to light certain facts that reveals fact are presented in the following table below highlighting prominent features of private universities and government universities.

Private Universities

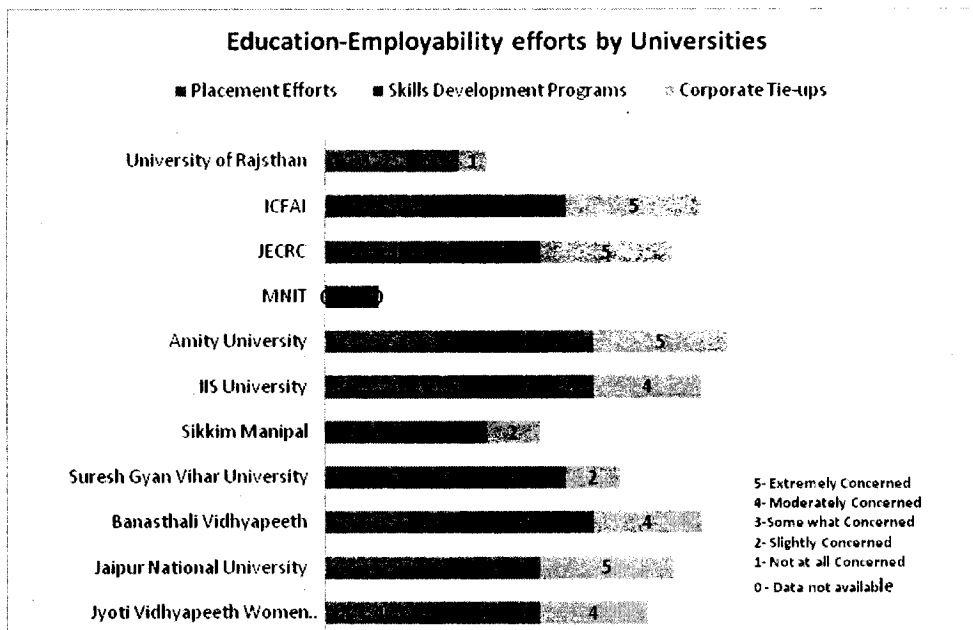
- They are better in terms of aids and facilities like infrastructure, libraries, IT orientations, etc.
- Maintain standards for recognition like better teachers, updated syllabus, regular examination pattern, etc.
- Fee is high but facilities are also better.
- Time to graduate is lesser and results are on time. Another important area of focus is ranking lists and the validation of degree by recognized bodies like UGC, AICTE, etc.

Government Universities

- Enjoys higher reputation and public trust.
- They are less capable of responding to crisis and are always in search of aid and grants.
- Fee is less, therefore they are always facing a shortage of resources.
- Degrees are never questioned for validity. Time to graduate in comparison to private university is longer. Result declaration is generally delayed. Teachers are less conscientious about lecture delivery.

The graph enlisted below tries to highlight the special efforts made by the top 10 universities of Jaipur. The comparative study of the facts and figures available on the web sites of various universities of Jaipur city (as shown in the graph1 below), clearly indicate that private universities are far better in comparison to government universities when it comes to placements and skills development of their students. The graph also highlights the kind of efforts put in by private universities, to help their students get better job opportunities. One interesting finding of this study was that the University of Rajasthan which has around 700 colleges under its umbrella does not delineate any such steps undertaken by it.

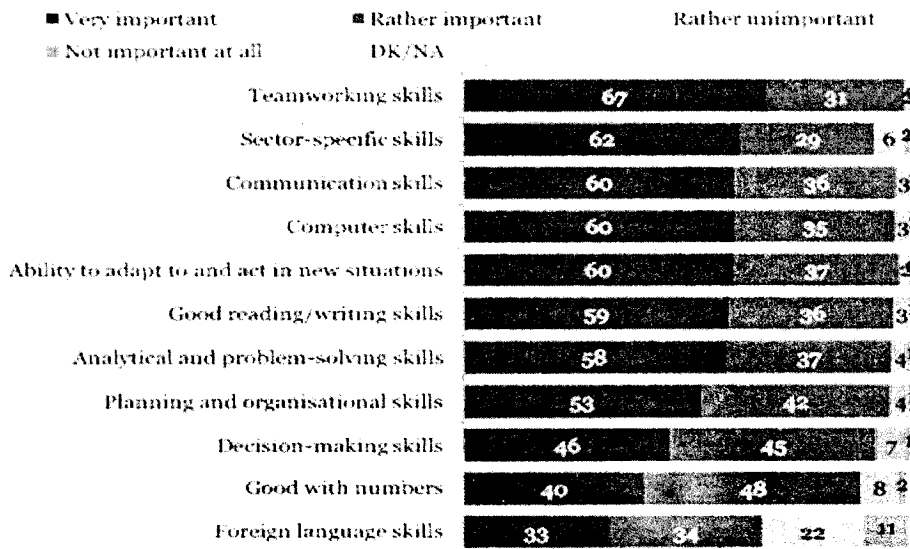
Graph 1:



Having highlighted the prominent features of public and private universities, we now turn to the employers' perspective. The secondary data (as shown in the graph 2 below) helps in deriving the importance level of multiple skills required by employers at the time of recruiting.

Graph 2:

Importance of various skills and capabilities when recruiting higher education graduates – TOTAL



Graph 2 offers a clear derivation to educators to incorporate some additional programmes related to skill development and upgrading of education system, to bridge the gap of education and employability. The graph incorporates employer perspective and the universities can be advised to develop course plans in accordance. Apart from the traditional degree courses the need of the hour is to develop people by polishing their communication skills, team work, analytical and investigating skills, leadership, self-motivation, negotiation, persuasion, decision-making, creativity, etc. Employers need to work along with education providers so that students learn the skills they can apply at work, and government could play critical role in this. A few such initiatives have already been taken up: for example ICICI bank has a tie-up with Banasthali Vidhyapeeth for banking education.

Secure Future

On the basis of the analysis of the present scenario a few suggestions could be made to the education sector to facilitate employability:

- Develop course plans which would be an ideal combination of academic and vocational trainings and secondly impart a specialized knowledge which is based upon skill development.
- Map competencies of individual students and customize skill development as per the need to ensure overall grooming.

- Adapt alternate system of education by making use of technology in imparting education, for instance online courses from foreign universities.
- Introduce a compulsory foundation course for all students covering areas like soft skills, industrial orientation, general and current awareness, group discussions, exchange programmes, overcoming theory-practice gap, etc.
- Introduce private and public partnership to boost education industry.
- Develop university-industry-linkage projects, etc.

Conclusion

Opportunities in education industry are enormous but students are facing threats of being unemployable, though educated. The scenario is getting scary day by day due to the rising problems of unemployment and underemployment. Thus heads and hands should be put together and measures should be taken in a proactive manner to secure the future of young India.

This paper concludes with suggestions of a few means to upgrade the system of education by bridging the gap between education and employability. Most universities differ in their concern level towards employability. Another area of focus is the skill requirement of employers. The best way of progress would be private-public partnership focusing more on vocational skills than academic growth with a special stress on University-Industry-Linkages. Thus this paper focuses on skill development and a need for special attention to mechanisms that connect education to employment.

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