

INSTITUTIONAL BRANDING AND EMPLOYABILITY OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN KERALA

JAMSHEEDA C. K.

Abstract: The higher education sector is at flux. Application of technological innovations, global exchange of knowledge and human resources, labour market involvement in curriculum designing and tuning of courses to meet the market requirements are some of the features of the recent transitions in the sector. At the same time higher education still constitutes the back bone of human resource development, which is inclusive of value addition through professional, technical and scientific education. At present students are joining the courses not for passion but as a matter of prestige and pressure from external environment. In order to keep this prestige, both the parents and students are now following the concept of institutional branding at the time of their joining. Brand and academic quality of an institution of higher education are interrelated criteria to attract the right talent both as faculty members as well as students. And also the induced demand for higher education is mainly due to the higher private returns expected from it resulting in a continuous investment for the same. The demand for the courses at one point leads to a corresponding supply of the qualified hands at another point with a time lag. The labour market absorption capacity need not always go hand in hand with the supply of trained hands in the respective fields due to many factors; some of them are external to the system. The excess supply of the qualified, hence create serious and alarming issues to educational investors at various levels like individual, family and policy makers. An analysis of institutional branding and the employability of technically (engineering) qualified is the crux of the present study.

Key words: Higher education, Institutional branding, Technical education.

Introduction: Higher education is a critical mechanism for socio-economic advancement among aspiring individuals and an important driver of economic mobility in our society. Moreover, a well educated workforce is vital to our nation's future economic growth also. For the attainment of intergenerational mobility and for future economic growth a well designed labour market plays an important role. Various socio economic and institutional factors influence the entry of a person in to the labour market. The accessibility of a person's higher education and his availability of job may affect him along with his family and his society. Since education is an investment decision by which individual spend current time and resources with the expectation of a higher rate of return in the future and hence, THE employability of an educated person has some economic implications too.

The present study is specifically to analyze the influence of institutional branding on employment generation among technically (engineering) qualified people. In Kerala engineering education was essentially public funded until 2001. The number of government aided private engineering colleges are few at that times. But the inability of the state to invest further in such type of education, prompted the government to grant no objection certificates to any private agency that approached it for permission to start an unaided colleges. This led to a dramatic increase in the number of engineering colleges in Kerala. It also leads to the emergence of competition among educational institutions. So this increased

competition among educational institutions, each institutions are giving a greater attention to the institutional branding to attract students and also to get attraction in the labour market also. Thus the technological changes and shrinking global boundaries have increased the significance of marketing and branding in education. So now a days the concept of institutional branding have great relevance and and have an influence on employability also.

Institutional branding; The concept: When people receive goods of similar quality and price range, Brand often determines the choice of people. (selame and selame 1988). In the field of institutional branding one of the most important problem that have to be solved is that the misunderstanding of people. People consider branding only as a name of the institution, a logo, or slogan. The Dictionary of Economic Terms explains "Brand" as a trade mark, logo, name or a symbol which is specially developed for the company. (Economika 2000). The other explanation is that "brand "is an instrument (like a name or mark) which clearly indicates the origin and ownership and distinguishes from similar products (Eiropas 2004). In real life it is the management style and a hard work of developing a long term strategy of the institution (papins 2011). At the time of the selection of an institution for higher study, the brand is a subjective concept which has to be developed in the minds of people, based on the emotions, associations, Thus brand is a unique identity of an institution. Branding depends on emotional

communication with internal and external audience (Hammond 2008).

Statement of the problem: The educational qualification of all people may not be equal at all. The value addition and human capital formation attained by the candidate are not equal for all beneficiaries. The labour market discrimination of the equally qualified is explained partially by these variables. Within the people, of the equally qualified, one may get preference while getting the job opportunity. A student who got high mark is denied the labour market entry and at the same time the entry will be on the basis of the institution from where they have qualified. It shows the existence of social imbalances and the influence of institutional branding in the labour market entry of a qualified person. Then the equalization of demand and supply is important for the well going of all economic activity. It is applicable in the labour market also. The existence of excess supply of qualified in labour market may be negatively affect the employability of qualified people. Above all, Sometimes leads to the problematic situation among educated people. The present study is an attempt to explore this issues with few questions in mind: (1) What are development in the higher education sector since 1990 (2) what is the degree in which branding of institutions influence the labour market involvement (3) How far the non involvement of qualified people in the labour market will reflect upon society

Objectives:

1. To understand the development of engineering education in Kerala since 1990.
2. To examine the importance of institutional branding and employability of technically qualified in kerala.
3. To explore the economic implications of non involvement in the labour market.

Methodology: The required information for this purpose, specifically to analyze the “Institutional branding and employability among technically qualified in Kerala” will be collected from, NSSO, Planning Commission documents ,economic surveys/Reviews, statistical data of employment/unemployment, Articles, and journals etc.

Results

- Since 1990 there is a tremendous changes in the field of higher education in Kerala especially in the case of technical education. Private participation in the field of higher education has increased number of self financing and unaided colleges. The peculiarity of these institutions are, they are “student oriented” or “fee based “institution. Further, in 2001 the government decided to “grant ‘no objection certificates’ to any private agency that approached it for permission

to start an unaided professional college” (Government of Kerala 2006). Privatisation of higher education has given a major thrust to professional and technical education in the state. This, the government policy of encouraging private participation in education, led to an emergence of number of colleges of professional and technical education. Therefore it is rightly held by many that the growth in higher education in the state is essentially due to the growth of self financing colleges, which can actually be called student-financed or fee-based institutions. The rapid growth in self financing private sector, led to the displacement of public sector by private sector in a big way. Now a days Self-financing colleges have become a big phenomenon in Kerala. In 1991, there were no self-financing colleges in Kerala in any discipline. Government and government-aided private institutions accounted for the total higher education sector. There were a very small number of self financing (also known as un-aided) institutions in school sector, but not in higher education. In Kerala the self financing colleges not only under private sector, but also under government sector. The main agencies in the government’s self-financing sector are the Institute of Human Resource Development (IHRD) and LBS Centre for Science and Technology. There are also self financing colleges under the government sector under several bodies such as KSRTC (Kerala State Road Transport Corporation), CAPE (Co-operative Academy of Professional Education), CCEK (Centre for Continuing Education Kerala), and Academy of Medical Sciences (KNM). The NORKA (Non-resident Keralites Department of the Government of Kerala) also has recently announced their plans to start self-financing professional colleges for the benefit of non-resident Keralites. Further, there also self financing colleges under state universities and under private deemed universities. In addition, there are self financing private colleges and also such colleges under private agencies such as Kerala Catholic Engineering College Managements’ Association. In 2012-13, the self-financing colleges, formed 58 per cent of all colleges in the state. While that is the average of all colleges, in some disciplines, the proportion of self-financing colleges forms an alarming proportion .These proportions might have increased in recent years. For instance, of the 160 engineering colleges in 2014, Out of them 148 are self financing colleges (Government of Kerala 2015); the corresponding ratio is 87.5 per cent in case of dental colleges and 75 per cent in cases of Ayurveda colleges. Most of the self financing colleges came up in professional and technical

education, and least in arts and sciences. Even in the technical self financing colleges like the engineering colleges, the concentration is on marketable disciplines like electronics engineering and computer sciences, and not in standard traditional but strong areas of engineering like mechanical, civil and electrical with special emphasis on 'marketable' disciplines.

- The increase in the number of educational institutions increased the competition among institutions and branding became an important factor to bring attraction towards particular college. The changes, such as privatization, diversification, decentralization, internationalization and increased competition are considered as a common phenomenon. All these changes have an effect on the operation of higher education institutions also. Now a days the Branding of education is gaining momentum with increasing number of private institutions, change in people's attitude towards education and changing scope for the different courses being offered. Basically, education is a service, thus it is intangible in nature, so, branding in education has to be based on the "experience" and employability" aspect. Brand and academic quality of an higher education institution are interrelated criteria to attract the right talent both as faculty members as well as the students. Thus there is a positive relationship between institutional branding and employability. It can be understood that entry of a qualified is not on the basis of marks they have got, but it is on the basis of the

institution from where they are qualified. The qualified people from some particular institutions faced a time lag to get a job. Because recruiting agencies are not interested to recruit candidates from particular colleges especially from government colleges. They were interested to select candidates from the colleges with highly

- Along with the increase in the number of colleges, every year each colleges are increasing the seats and providing admission to more students in to the courses. In 1991, the number of engineering colleges are only 9, but then it increased in to 45 in 2001 and into 142 in 2019 (Kerala state planning board 2012). This is happened because of the growth of the private institutions and they are interested in profit from them in terms of money and this negatively affected those candidates they were qualified previously. Each and every recruitment agencies are interested to select fresher's.
- The non involvement in the labour market by technically qualified leads to some problems. Because education is an investment with the expectation of highest return in the future. It incur some costs such as social cost and private cost. Private costs are the cost incurred by the individual are foregone earnings while studying plus any educational fees or incidental expenses the individual incures during schooling. In the computation of social costs include the state's or society's at large spending on education.

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14. Professional educational system is the special courses offered at many colleges and universities that put emphasis on professional development. And they are specifically oriented toward professionals waiting to enhance skills useful for their specific work advancing higher education.

Jamsheeda C.K/ Research Scholar/ Dept. of Economics/ IRISH/ Nirmalagiri/ Kannur university/