



A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF GRADUATES IN RELATION TO JOB READINESS (HYDERABAD REGION)

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Abstract: Job readiness, is a relatively new phenomena, can be defined as the level to which students are perceived as having attitudes and attributes that enable them to be prepared for success in the workforce. Increasingly, organizations report that recent graduates are insufficiently prepared for a job as per the requirement of organizations. University and college administrators however allude to the contrary. Student's going through this transition from classroom to the workplace have never been studied or understood in terms of their related work readiness. This study therefore perceives work readiness as well as influencing academic characteristics in relation to job readiness. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire and was shared with 100 graduates' students in Hyderabad, Telangana. Secondary data has been collected from various websites, journals, and articles. The study adopts quantitative data in a descriptive approach to assist graduates pertaining to perception of Graduates in relation to job readiness. The data has been analysed using simple percentage method and has been interpreted accordingly based on results. From the study it can be concluded that the role of colleges in making student job ready is immense. Colleges should design curriculum in such a way that a student is academically strong as well as skill sets are to be improved to make a student job ready.

Index terms: Graduates, Job ready, Colleges, Perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of a quality education at graduate level is to improve the skills of students, and prepare the students to gain new knowledge and to ultimately get a right job opportunity. Every country highlight of its human resource as the backbone for their economy to flourish and, a skilled workforce that is ready to tackle future problems is an asset to the organization. Although education cannot stick to one single purpose, education prepares students to be ready as a skilled workforce, culturally literate, critical thinkers and to ready to compete in the global marketplace. The 21st century has seen major changes including the very concept idea of career where they are making strategic choices in improving their human capital. Selection and recruitment decisions of organizations are being made based on the skill set and competencies that a of the potential employee's must be fit to a particular ole. These changes call for universities and colleges to not only make sure that high quality work-ready students are being trained, but also prepare students whose abilities surpass technical classroom-based knowledge. While there is a smooth transition from secondary education to postsecondary education in terms of the skills and the standards to be met, the pathway from college or graduate school to successful job performance is not clearly defined, measured, or evaluated (Wendler et al, 2012). There is a list of credentials, varied tests, plethora of certifications and networking that a graduate must go through in order to secure a well-paying and secured job within his or her field of study. Even though Universities and colleges are offering a wide range of courses and programs, there is still a gap in elation work readiness among graduates. Not only is there a gap between the student's education and their careers, but both teachers and students find it challenging to translate academic achievement into work readiness and career success (Grummon, 2017). In addition, the standards and benchmarks for work readiness skills that are necessary for success in the workplace are scant and misunderstood at best (ACT, 2013).

On the other hand, graduate students continue to select universities or colleges with different career-related needs. In today's scenario most of these students have been exposed to the world of work, through internships, part time jobs and other opportunities. But the irony is even though these students have sought assistance with their career planning prior to entering the workforce, they are returning to the classroom for career-related needs. Educators as well as students have called for the need to tailor effective work-integrated learning (WIL) by redesigning the curriculum which caters to today's Zen Z as well satisfies HR requirements. Arranging for career counselling services to this category of students plays a vital role to provide the required motivation to

the students. In the current dispensation requiring individuals to make meaning of their dynamic career climate without any input from organizations (Young & Collin, 2018); there is little empirical research to study how these students are being influenced as well as their perceptions in relation to their work readiness.

The relevance of understanding career development among graduate students on university campuses who are going through career adaptations will enable the field of HRD to connect students' career development needs to organizational expectations.

Purpose of the study:

The available data and research findings highlight to focus and understand to prepare graduate students ready for jobs. Though these students at the graduate level may differ from traditional age students in terms of their career needs, very little research work has been done to understand about the perceptions of work readiness among these students. The purpose of this study is to investigate work readiness among graduate program completers at a Research undergraduate college in Hyderabad.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is the relative work readiness of passed out and students pursuing graduate program as measured by six Likert scale questionnaire in the Graduating Student Survey.

Objectives:

1. To describe students who passed out as well as students pursuing last semester graduate program on the following personal as well as academic characteristics:

- a) Whether or not the student had been to Internship
- b) Whether or not the student did a part time job

c) Participation in Conferences

d) Participation in CRT

2. To determine the perceptions held by graduates in various colleges at Hyderabad regarding the University's as well as college's performance in making students ready for recruitment drives.

Definitions:

Career Development has been defined by Simonsen (1997) as “an ongoing process of planning and directed action toward personal work and life goals. Development means growth, continuous acquisition, and application of one's skills. Career development is the outcome of the individual's career planning and the organization's provision of support and opportunities, ideally a collaborative process”.

Career orientations refer to the way in which people view and approach their career, which is assumed to be an essential driving force behind their career choices and career self-management behaviour (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Tschopp, Grote, & Gerber, 2014).

Internship an internship is a professional learning experience that offers meaningful, practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest.

Participation in Conferences can be defined as in this study as whether a graduate student has travelled to present a paper at a conference during their course of study.

Graduate program completion can be defined as any student who has undertaken a graduate Program of study and has completed it.

Significance of the study:

UGC in India has indicated that graduate degrees are not only highly valuable but are in high demand by employers. The rate of hiring among graduates across India stood at 26 percent in 2020, compared to about 22 percent in the previous year. Overall, the hiring rate among graduates from various fields of study averaged at around 23 percent, indicating a slow but steady employability rate. It is important for graduate students moving out of universities be prepared and ready for the new job demands of the future.

It is an understood fact that the career development of an individual is no longer linear but is dependent on the individual capabilities. Graduate students more often look for and expect guidance from career counsellors, mentors/role model future employers as they prepare to graduate. This study investigates the perceptions of HR in relation to readiness of graduate as a necessary step in the discussion of graduates transitioning to the workplace. On a regular basis, graduate students connect with systems, curricula, and organizational criteria that have may an impact on their career plans, and readiness for the workforce.

2.Review of Literature:

Prof. Amruta Kirtane Deshpande and Prof. Dr. Kirti Gupta in their journal “Employability of Management Graduates and Challenges in Indian Higher Education” (2021) observed That the Indian Education System Has Got Critical Challenges Like Up gradation Of Syllabus, Brain Drain of Talent, Quality of Education Offered, Quota System and Polarization, Mobility of Faculty, Communication Gap. It Is Important That All the Stakeholders Responsible for It

Should Take a Note of This and Take Appropriate Measures to Improve the Quality of Indian Higher Education.

Dr. Kavitha Desaia and Jyotirmayee Ramisetty in their journal “Employability Skill Training Intervention in Higher Education in India: A Model Based Study” (2021) highlighted that economic development of a country depends on the level and quality of skill Sets of labour market. Corporations that have more than 2,500 employees and large campuses should take the onus of collaborating with the HEIs to train graduating students to make them industry ready. There are several ways to fulfil this collaboration such as internships, workshops and live projects which can provide the students opportunities to experience the work life and employer expectations.

Ashleigh Schweinsberg in his article “Psychology Education and Work Readiness Integration: A Call for Research in Australia” (2021) highlighted the need for exploration of the discipline specific attributes of psychology graduates which would solidify the differentiation and uniqueness of the same profession and also concluded that work readiness is a needs to occur from entry to tertiary education right up until final graduation, instead of being an afterthought triggered as graduation looms.

Michael Angelo Duca Perera in his international journal “Career Readiness: A Survey on Effectiveness of Learning Employability Skills at University Level” (2020) suggested that the results strongly confirm the effectiveness of the ESD (Employment Skill Development) module with an overall 89.55% of students expressing their confidence in facing career challenges. The results also show a clear indication of career readiness through the three dimensions namely self-assessment, job search techniques, and self-marketing tools. Students were equipped with skills to make winning moves in the modern-day competitive job market. Students found the ESD module useful in increasing their career readiness. It confirms the usefulness of having such kind of training at university level and likewise applauds the effectiveness of the module.

Shveta Raina in her article “The Importance of Work Readiness Career Planning and Development in India” mentioned that instead of waiting around for someone to train you or hire you, the youth should take up the challenge of getting work-ready and finding their own career path. They should develop their soft skills, hard skills and focus on garnering as much corporate exposure as possible through internships, jobs and mentorship opportunities.

Sanjeev Kumar and Parth Patel in their journal “Work-readiness of Indian graduates: A multi-stakeholder approach to assess competence deficits and causes, and possible solutions” (2019) suggested that considering that the alignment of subjective work-readiness competencies between graduates and employers is vital for smooth transitions from university/college to work, this study found a range of competence deficits based on the observations of both the stakeholders, from the perspectives of policy makers. In doing so, this chapter develops a foundational understanding and perspective of three main stakeholders concerning competence deficits of Indian graduates, causes and recommended solutions for the same. Many employers have also shown concern that employees lack necessary skills to perform jobs. There is enough evidence to point out that the skills picked up in graduate and undergraduate programmes.

Rishi Kumar in his journal “vocational training in India: determinants of participation and effect on wages” (2019) concluded that formal vocational training is associated with higher wages with the effect being the highest in the primary sector and the model suggests that there exist good economic returns, which are associated with formal vocational training, and hence, it makes sense to invest resources in vocational training.

Divyalok Sharma Director – Client Development, Pearson (VUE) in their article “Assessing the Right Talent and Job Readiness for India’s Professionals- Challenges and opportunities in the India” (2015) highlighted that hiring sector the results tell a story about the work that still lies ahead in building trust in job seekers’ abilities, skills, loyalty and job performance. Whilst this study cannot be taken as a complete picture of the India employment market, we hope that it may inform the ongoing debate on solutions by supporting both job candidates in being better prepared for job roles and employers in finding and retaining talent.”

Methodology:

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to perceive job readiness and the student perception in relation to skills required and student expectation in relation to college and university among at graduate program completers at Hyderabad region.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study are graduate program completers (especially B.Com., BBA, and Vocational) at Hyderabad. These students serve diverse populations and their students come from different socioeconomic and school backgrounds. A total sample of 100 graduate program completers as well present students pursuing last semester are included in the survey.

Instrumentation

The Student Survey conducted, covered every graduating semester was used as the primary data collection instrument. The survey has personal and academic information and items that measured perceived job readiness of graduate program completers. The survey also has items that measured students' perceptions of about their job readiness and expectations of students in relation to universities and colleges in preparing them for the world of work.

3. DATA COLLECTION:

The primary data for this study was collected from the students through a structured questionnaire and the raw data were saved in Excel. Secondary data is collected from various websites, journals, dissertations, thesis etc.

Data Analysis:

The data analysis is divided into two stages. Stage one includes screening of the data to check for accuracy of the data file, missing data and also to check for assumptions.

The researcher decided to retain respondents who answered items related to the Dependent variable (perceived work readiness).

The second stage is to relate the data according to the specific objectives. Measures of central tendency were used to describe the data. These results were presented in terms of the objectives of the study.

1. Principle activity upon graduation

S. NO	Principle activity up on graduation	Number of Responses	Percentage %
1	Employment, full-time Paid	73	73%
2	Employment, part-time paid	10	10%
3	Voluntary Activity	4	4%
4	Other Activity	13	13%
	TOTAL	100	100%

TABLE 1.1: 1.Principal activity upon graduation

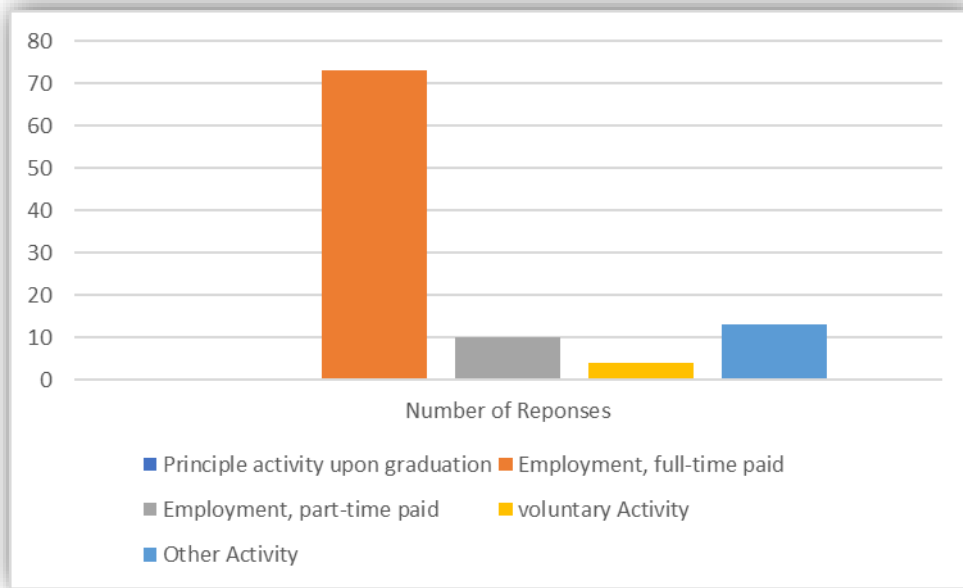


FIGURE 1.1- Principal activity upon graduation

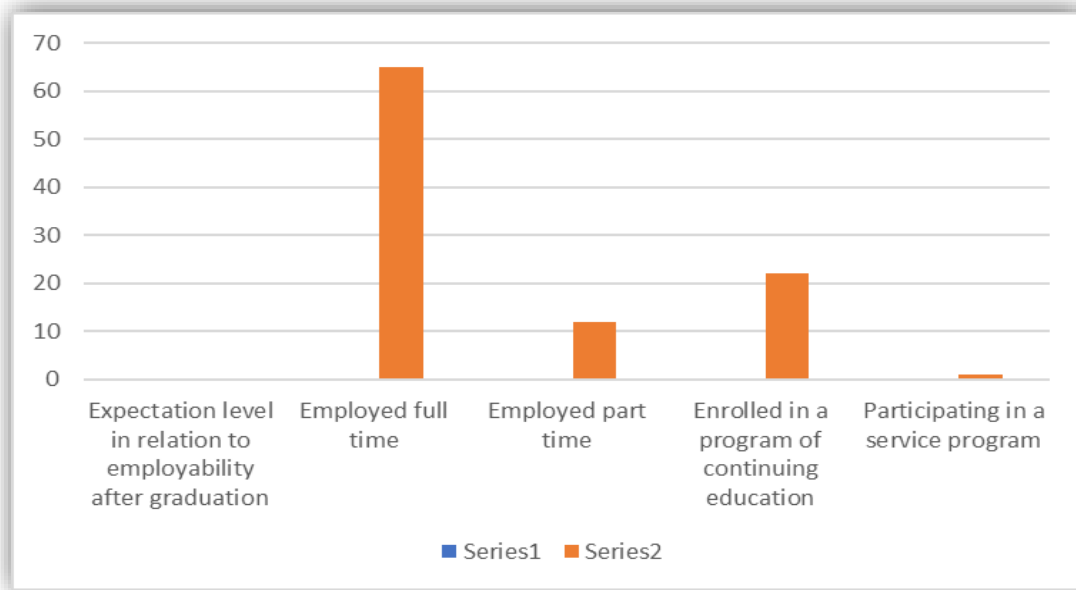
From the above figure it can be clearly inferred that 73(73%) respondents are looking forward for full time paid employment after graduation. 10(10%) respondents are looking for part time job after graduation. 4(4%) and 13(13%) respondents opted for voluntary activity and other activity after graduation.

2. Expectation level in relation to employability after graduation

S. NO	Expectation level in relation to employability after graduation	Number of Response	Percentage %
1	Employment, full-time Paid	65	65%
2	Employment, part-time paid	12	12%
3	Enrolled in a program of continuing education	22	22%
4	Participating in a service program	1	1%
	TOTAL	100	100%

Figure 1.2: Expectation level in relation to employability after graduation

Figure 1.2: Expectation level in relation to employability after graduation



From the above figure there is a clarity that 65 respondents (65%) have an expectation that they get full time employment, 12 (12%) respondents are looking for part time job. 22 (22.9%) respondents have a plan to continue or pursue education. 1 (1.04%) of the respondents have an idea to take up voluntary service program.

3. Level of satisfaction of your job in relation to your level of education

S. NO	Level of satisfaction of your job in relation level of education	Number of Response	Percentage %
1	Above my level of	65	65%
2	At my level of education	12	12%
3	It is below my level of education	22	22%
4	Neutral	1	1%
	TOTAL	100	100%

TABLE 1.3: Level of satisfaction of your job in relation level of education job in relation level of education

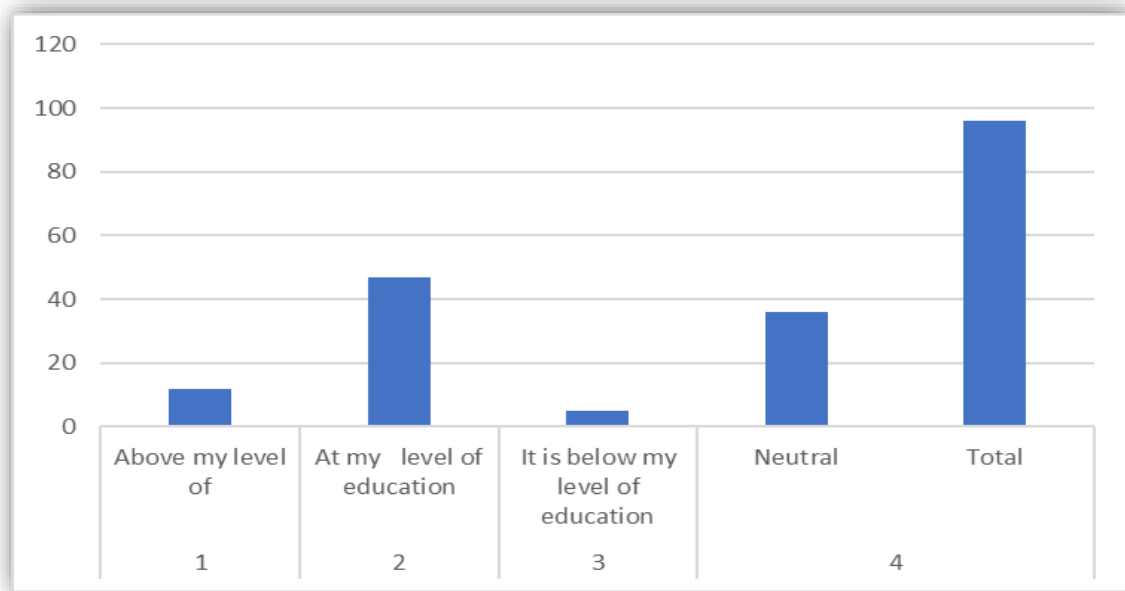


FIGURE 1.3: Level of satisfaction of your job in relation level of education

From the above analysis, it can be inferred that the 12(12%) respondents their job is who are into a full-time job are satisfied that their job above their level of education. 47(47%) are satisfied that their job is to their level of education. 36(36%) of students were neutral to this question.

4. Source(s) of job lead

S. NO	SOURCES OF JOB LEAD	Number of Response	Percentage %
1	Job Portal	12	12%
2	Employment Agency	6	6%
3	Direct Application	15	15%
4	Campus Placement	66	66%
	TOTAL	100	100%

Table 1.4 – Source (s) Of job lead

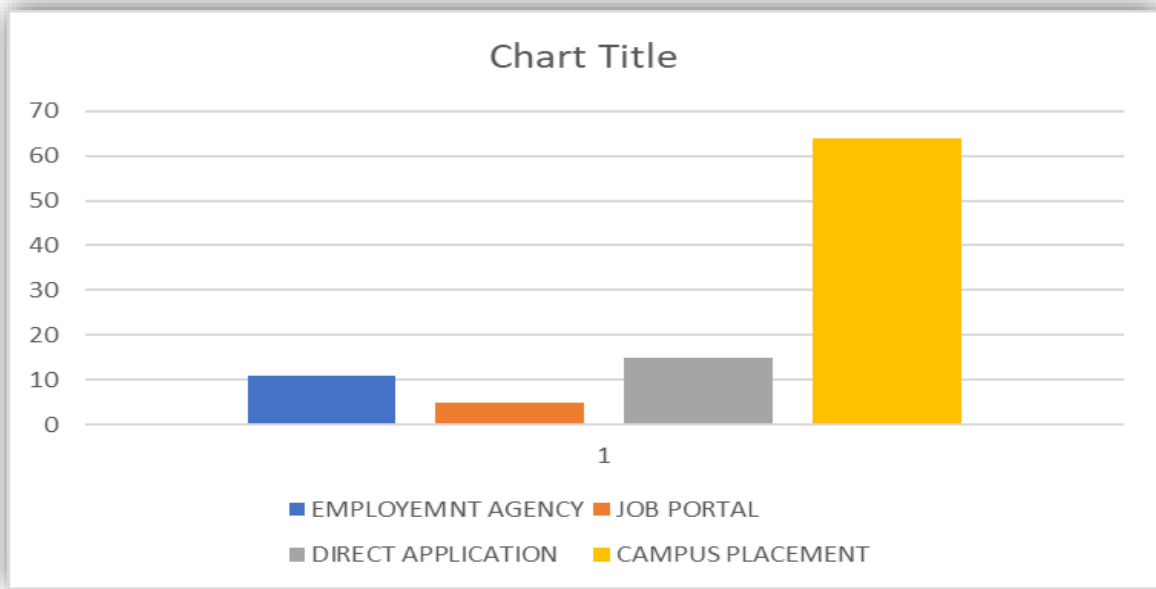


Figure No. 1.4- Source(s) of job lead

From the above it can be inferred that 66(66%) of the respondents could get a job lead from campus placement drive by colleges, 12 (12%) of the respondents could get job lead from a job portal , 15(15.%) of the respondents applied directly for a job position and only 6 (6%)relied on employment agencies in search of jobs.

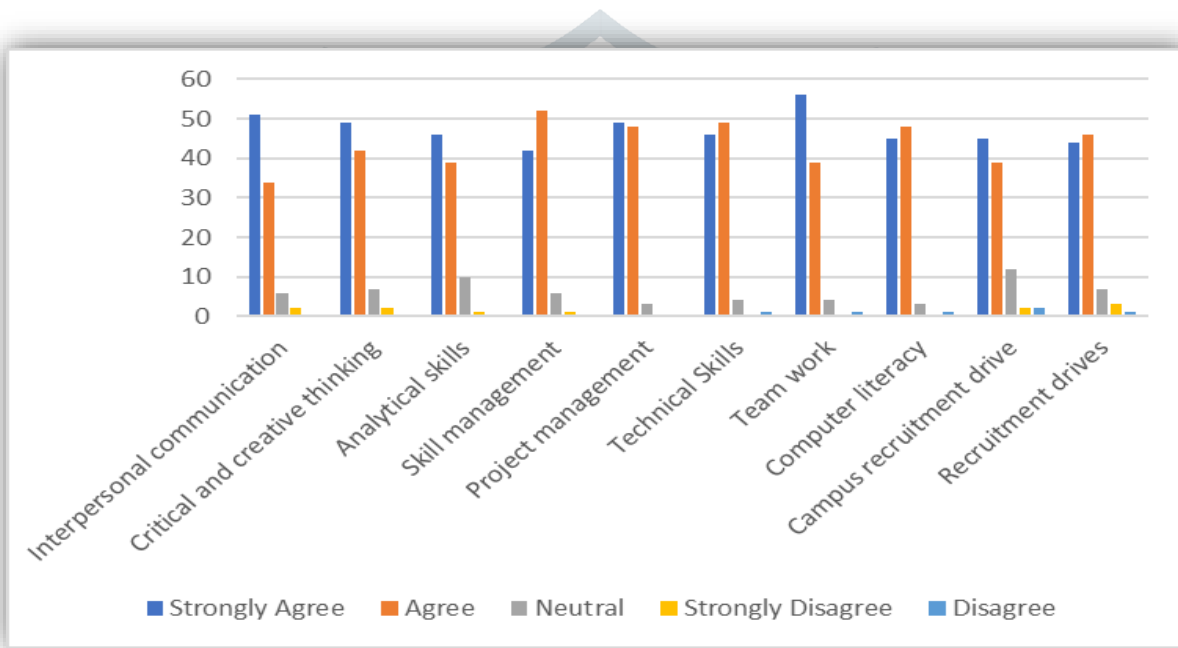
5.Perception of students on various parametes in relation Job Readiness

	Interper sonal commun ication	Crit ical and crea tive thin king	Ana lytic al skill s	Skill mana geme nt	Project manag ement	Tec hni cal Ski lls	Team work	Compute r literacy	Campus recruitment drive	Recruitment drives
Strongly Agree	51	49	46	42	49	46	56	45	45	44
Agree	34	42	39	52	48	49	39	48	39	46
Neutral	6	7	10	6	3	4	4	3	12	7

Strongly Disagree	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 1.5: Perception of students on various parameters in relation Job Readiness

FIGURE 1.5: Perception of students on various parameters in relation Job Readiness



Graduates (Respondents) had

A set of parameters were sent to respondents to understand the perception of students to be job ready. The parameters include interpersonal communication, critical and Analytical Skills, Project management, skill management, technical skills, team work, computer literacy, and campus recruitment. 98(98%) respondents (graduates) strongly agreed as well as agreed that all the above parameters are to be upgraded to be job ready and all the respondents believe that acquiring these skills along with recruitment drive play an important role for a student to be job ready.

5. Student Perception of their expectation from a University/College to make them job ready.

	Redesign Academic Curriculum	Training Academicians	Introducing co-scholastic activities	Campus Recruitment	Introduce CRT	Academic Conferences Seminars	Arranging for paid Internships	Publishing Research Journals	Recruitment Drive	Campus Placement	Tie-ups with Consultancies for Recruitment
Strongly Agree	30	37	35	41	42	36	35	40	41	50	46
Agree	52	51	52	49	49	47	46	48	47	41	40
Neutral	16	12	11	9	6	16	17	11	10	9	12
Strongly Disagree	1	0	1	1	3	1	0	1	2	0	0
Disagree	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1.6: Student Perception of their expectation from a University/College to make them job ready.

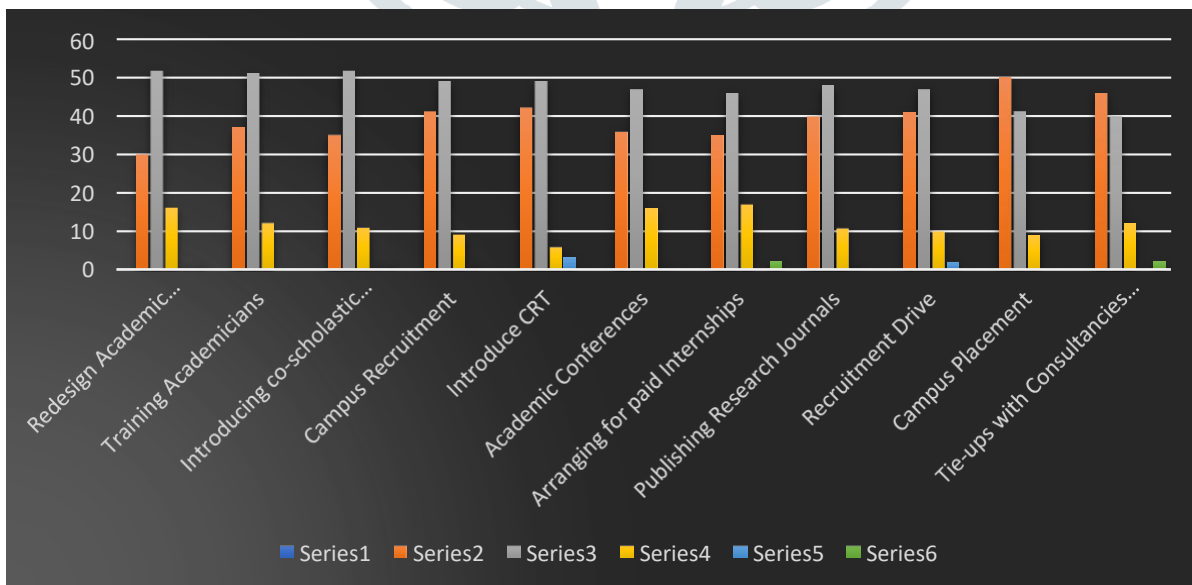


Figure 1.6: Student Perception of their expectation from a University/College to make them job ready.

- From the above figure we can infer that students have some expectation from the University and Colleges they graduate.
- 30 respondents and 52 respondents strongly agree and agree that the curriculum should be redesign to suit the current job market.
- 37and 51 respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Academicians should be trained to help students or graduates to be job ready.
- 35 respondents and 52 respondents strongly agreed and agreed that co scholastic activities are to be introduced
- 90% of the respondents perceived that CRT program should be introduced to make the job ready.
- More than 90% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that colleges should arrange recruitment drive and tie up with consultancies for better job opportunities and to make students job ready.
- 90% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that colleges should arrange for conferences, Seminars, paid internships, which helps a student to be job ready.

7. Self-Rating of a student in relation to preparedness to Job Market

Rating	Number of Ratings	Percentage
Poor	1	1%
Average	8	8%
Good	29	29%
Very Good	44	44%
Excellent	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Table 1.7: Self-Rating of a student in relation to preparedness to Job Market

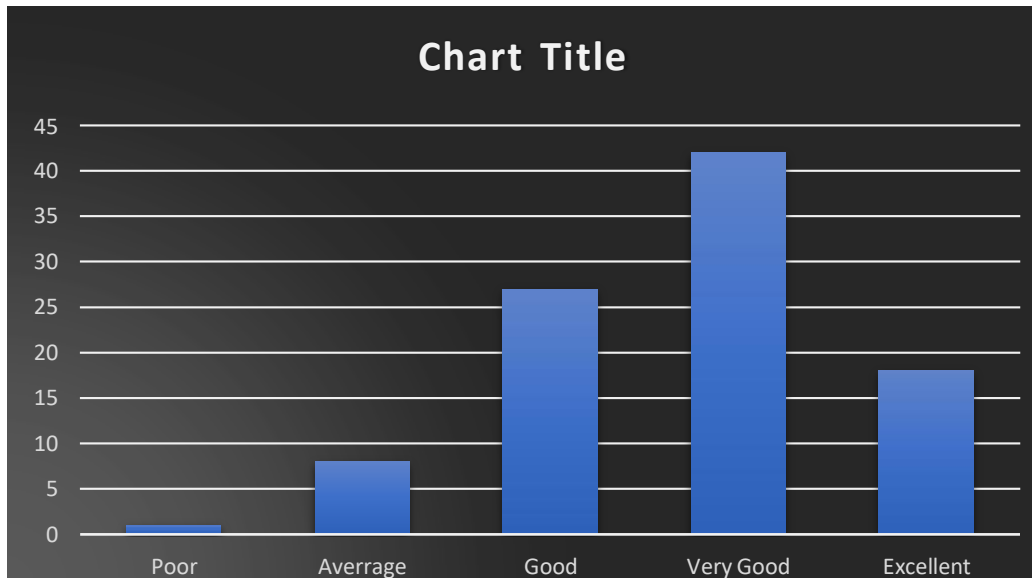


Figure 1.7: Self-Rating of a student in relation to preparedness to Job Market

From the above table we can infer that 18.75% of the respondents rated themselves as excellent in relation to their preparedness to a job market. 43.75% rated themselves as very good, 28.12% and 8% of the respondents rated themselves as good and average in relation to their preparedness to job market.

4. FINDINGS:

1. 65 respondents (65%) have an expectation that they get full time employment, 12(12%) respondents are looking for part time job
2. 66(66%) of the respondents could get a job lead from campus placement drive by colleges.
3. 98(98%) respondents(graduates) strongly agreed that parameters like communication skills, analytical skills, critical thinking, participation in CRT, seminars, conferences, play a vital role to be job ready
4. 98(98%) of the respondents strongly agreed that campus recruitment conducted by Colleges and Universities are very important for a graduate student to secure a job.
5. 90(90%) of the students have an expectation that colleges and universities should take up the responsibility to conduct CRT, introduce skill development program to upgrade communication skills and analytical skills to make the students job ready.

6. 90(90%) of the students have an expectation that colleges and Universities should take up the responsibility to conduct CRT to upgrade the skills of the students and also conduct Campus recruitment drive for helping the students to secure a job.

6. CONCLUSION:

With the rising college costs and availability of varied range of college options to students, it is evident that colleges need to meet to the expectations of students. There is a rising concern among students about the Return on Investment as they are asking some tough questions relating the preparedness of colleges to upgrade student's skills as well as make the student's job ready. To meet to the expectations and perceptions of students, colleges need to buck up to create intentional efforts to improve career readiness so that students' expectations can be met. At a graduate level a student is considered to be job ready if he can confidently attend an interview and can secure a job. From the organizational perspective, prospective job aspirant should possess good communications skill, analytical skills, critical thinking and so on. These skills can be improved at a graduate level only when a college takes up the initiative to make the students job ready by redesigning curriculum which is more futuristic from student point of view. colleges also need to introduce CRT program to upskill the students and arrange for internships, conduct seminars, arrange for Research publications, arrange for mock interviews, conduct campus recruitment drives for the benefit of the students. All such efforts by colleges will go a long way to make a student work ready which benefits a student to be confident and helps him/her to face an interview and secure a job. Colleges can also provide academic credit for internships and encourage students have at least one internship either micro-internships, virtual or in-person. Colleges can establish internship scholarship funds to support students and motivate students to take up internships. Work-study programs are to be encouraged by colleges to ensure academically integrated linkages. Facilitators should be encouraged for externship programs to give them a chance to be exposed to modern workplaces and work challenges, so that faculty can be more innovative and their creativity can help to bring work-integrated learning into their curriculum. Student should be encouraged to pursue at least one long-term project to get a practical awareness which is much needed for a student to be job ready.

Colleges should introduce career service advising to provide an extensive service which includes resume writing conducting mock interviews, access to industrial experts for advice and role-specific advising so students can benefit to be job ready.

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