

**ANALYTICAL STUDY OF EFFECTS OF COVID CRISIS ON
CAMPUS RECRUITMENT AT TECHNICAL & MANAGEMENT
INSTITUTIONS**

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Abstract

The Campus recruitment or campus placements programme conducted within educational institutions or in a common place to provide job opportunities to students pursuing or about to complete the educational programme, has proved to be a win-win situation for all the parties, i.e., students, institutions and the industries. In this programme, industries visit the college campus to select students depending on their academic performance, knowledge, ability to work, attitude and aptitude, capability, focus and objective, which saves the time, effort and money of the industry spent in traditional recruitment process. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought the entire world to a halt, affecting the businesses cycle across the globe. The crisis has impacted campus placements and the student community is one of the worst affected segments. The institutions and industries in turn are also suffering. The lockdown enforced to prevent the spread has brought economies to the ground and has jeopardized the job prospects of many and in turn changed the entire dynamics of the process leading to prevalence of uncertainty. With unemployment rising during these tough times, recent graduates waiting in the wings and looking for their first job feel entrapped. As per the industry experts, campus recruitments have been adversely affected due to the pandemic this year and may have more cascading impact during the next year. The paper attempts to understand the effects of pandemic caused by the Corona virus on campus recruitment and the emerging scenario at technical & management institutions.

Keyword: COVID19, Campus Recruitment, Coronavirus, Professional Courses, Campus Placements, Lockdown

1. Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic that has swept the world is perhaps the most impactful and consequential incident of this century. It has not only strained the capabilities of governance, public health infrastructure and social administration of affected nations but had the cascading effect on the industries and the educational institutions and changed their dynamics significantly. The coronavirus outbreak has not only paralyzed people's lives but also had much greater and far-reaching adverse impacts on some individuals in this VUCA world. The campus placement this year has taken a hit due to the global pandemic. The job market has been hit in the general economic slowdown caused by the lockdown. Many companies that were big players in the recruitment process are staying away from this year's placement drive.

Moreover, the placement scenario in institutions of national importance, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) have also witnessed a setback due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The students who completed their courses in the year 2020 and were about to join the country's workforce are awaiting clarity on their employment status. Furthermore, COVID-19 has not only affected the future of these students but the educational institutions are also significantly strained due to the uncertainties storming the job market and thereby affecting the intake of the students. These students are expectedly concerned about their career options as the job market has come to disappointing halt with concerned organizations realigning their business processes to cope up with the prevailing unprecedented situation.

The lockdown imposed due to COVID 19 has resulted in the stalling of new projects, keeping on hold the new expansions of the industries and exploring the new vistas by the industrial and commercial organisations and most severe and serious part is the closure of many business activities. It has resulted in to companies struggling to aggressively revamp the manpower in the organisations. Unfortunately, in India, any turmoil and trouble in the industry and commerce results in to axing of the manpower. This is experienced time and again. In these difficult times, some organisations are trying their best to strike a balance between benevolence and cash flows, adeptness and adoptability, sustenance and survival but all are not on the right track. Moreover, due to unprecedented and unforeseen pandemic, the required support from the financial institutions and the government is has also withered thereby affecting the wellbeing of the industry. It has given big jolt to the deployment of manpower. As per many industry experts and the personal experience of the authors of this paper, the campus recruitment this year is naturally affected badly due to pandemic and its cascading effect which may be more significantly visible during the next year. The pandemic situation may be for the brief period but its impact is going to be everlasting. The reason being the drastic change in the mindset of the barons of the industry and commerce. The significant metamorphosis is expected in the business processes in the days to come due to the severe and unforeseen shocks and tremors experienced by the industry in the current year.

While considering the campus recruitment process, this aspect is to be taken in to account and gear up accordingly. During this time of the year, most of the colleges are almost done with their placement

season and the students join the corporate world. But in the current year, due the lockdown, it seems that the dreams of many young professionals are shattered who were expecting to be recruited through campus placements. Some of the companies have started recruiting virtually using the digital platforms, in 'the new normal'. Still, many believe that the requirements have changed vividly in response to the new competitive business environment that is manifested by fast response time, flexibility, and managerial and technological innovations. This 'new normal' requires higher and more varied skills, particularly broad skills such as adaptability, problem-solving, team work, communication skills, numeracy skills, management skills etc. not only for the students but also for the TPOs (Training and Placement Officers) and the HR Managers. Unfortunately, all institutes are not capable enough to produce the students who have such skills.

2. Literature Review

Literature Review is definitely an important aspect of any research. With the present depressing level of employability amongst fresh engineering and management graduates in India and the lack of employability skills and the gap in demand of quality and supply, the literature review and the study is of utmost significance. In the backdrop of rising concerns about the COVID-19 spread, educational institutions in India are facing a rough year ahead with disruptions in their campus placements, as the pandemic has affected businesses worldwide. Looking at the current situation, 'Eduvoice India' reached out to TPOs of various colleges and gathered their opinion on the Effect of COVID 19 on the Campus Placement scenario of 2020.

A report titled 'Campus Hiring 2020: Challenges, Trends, and Best Practices' by Mercer | Mettl measures the challenges with the traditional campus recruitments and the solutions organizations are deploying to overcome the disruption and proceed with their hiring schedules. While many students have been already placed, some are still struggling to find a good job offer. However, due to the prolonged lockdown imposed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, few companies are deferring the offers made, while some have withdrawn offers made already. The report tries to understand the mechanism of traditional campus recruitment processes in the past, besides assessing the changes that can be carried out by organizations in their campus hiring strategy to overcome the unexpected disruptions, such as COVID-19. It further reveals how campus hiring can be efficiently shifted to digital platforms, using technology, advance online tools and virtual recruitment solutions, making standard processes resilient to future disruptions.

Beland et al. (2020) examine COVID-19 effects on employment and wages in the US in short-term. Their findings suggest that COVID-19 augmented the unemployment rate, reduced hours of work and workforce participation but had no noteworthy impacts on wages. Similar results have been found for the case of Europe. According to Pouliakas and Branka (2020) and Fana et al. (2020), the segments of the labour force most likely to be impacted by social distancing measures and practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with these findings, Palomino et al. (2020) find that the crisis is producing in all European countries increases in the levels of inequality and poverty. Using the data from France, (Fana et al. 2020). Barrot et al. (2020) show that the reduction in employment caused by social distancing measures is the highest in arts and leisure; hotel and restaurants; service activities; agriculture;

food and construction; wholesale and retail, and the lowest in telecommunications, computer services, consulting, technical and scientific activities. According to Dingel and Neiman (2020), the share of Work From Home(WFH) jobs exceeds 40% in UK and Sweden, while the proportion shrinks in Italy (35%), Spain (32%) and France (38%). Thus, the potential for WFH seems to be lower in the countries that are badly affected by the COVID crisis.

3. Objectives of the study

The Primary objectives of the Research are:

- a) To analyze the factors affecting campus recruitment post COVID-19 pandemic
- b) To understand the new campus recruitment practices followed by the industry with reference to Engineers and Management Graduates.
- c) To comprehend various strategies adopted by the recruiting companies, Engineering and Management institutes for the campus recruitment post pandemic.
- d) To recommend and give suggestions to the Educational Institute, aspiring Students and Industry regarding the recruitment drive.

4. Hypothesis: Hypothesis for the study is given as under:

H₀: There is no relationship between Campus recruitment of students and COVID 19 effect on the overall market

H₁: Campus recruitment of students is correlated with the COVID 19 effect on the overall market

5. Research Methodology:

Research Methodology is an approach to take care of the examination issue in an efficient manner. This research is designed to study the analytical study of effects of COVID crisis on Campus Recruitment at Technical & Management Institutions. To keep the research design in-line with the research objectives, the author has taken due care, that the tools used in research are objective oriented.

The researcher has used Exploratory Research Technique to get into the insights of the proposed research work. The purpose of the exploratory research process is to progressively narrow the scope of the research topic and to transform discovered problems into defined ones, incorporating specific research objectives.

This study primarily deals with the campus recruitment training in selected engineering and management institutes with reference to the post COVID scenario. During this research, the researcher has used various sources of secondary data including reports, reviews, authoritative records and information gathered through subjective research, which is mentioned in bibliography/references.

The researcher has collected the primary data by interview method using standardized questionnaire from the students, teachers and industries. The questionnaire consists of a number of questions typed in

a definite order in the form of a set of forms. Questionnaire is a schedule, which is normally filled up by the respondent, but in case of this research work, all questions were open ended; hence it was filled by the researcher during virtual and telephonic interviews.

In this study, the researcher has taken responses from 600 students, 90 faculties and 30 HR managers. Total sample size with demographic analysis is given below.

Demographic Analysis

| | | Type of respondent | | | | | |
|--------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|
| | | Student | | Faculty | | HR Manager | |
| | | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Gender | Male | 376 | 62.7% | 67 | 74.4% | 15 | 50.0% |
| | Female | 224 | 37.3% | 23 | 25.6% | 15 | 50.0% |
| Age | 18 - 25 Years | 590 | 98.3% | 11 | 12.2% | 6 | 20.0% |
| | 25 - 35 Years | 10 | 1.7% | 50 | 55.6% | 10 | 33.3% |
| | 35- 45 Years | 0 | 0.0% | 17 | 18.9% | 5 | 16.7% |
| | More than 45 years | 0 | 0.0% | 12 | 13.3% | 9 | 30.0% |

1.

Limitations of the study:

The study and analysis will be limited to few institutes based on the following factors:

- One recognized Management Institute or B-School from Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur city
- One recognized Engineering Institute or college from Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur city
- A finishing school or institute in advanced technologies Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur city

Statistical Techniques:

The statistical tools applied in this study are:

1. Tabulation: The tables for the demographic distribution reflect the sample to be collected as per the criteria under the objectives of this study. This fair distribution helps in performing the hypothesis testing considered under this study.
2. Reliability Test Analysis: The 5-point Likert's scale is used to collect the responses where every Likert's item is provided the given weights: 1-Strongly agree, 2-Agree,3-Neither agree nor disagree and 4- Disagree. To test the reliability of the format, design a pre survey test is necessary before executing the overall study. For this Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test is performed on the designed parameter of COVID 19 effect on the overall market. 30 samples of students, 20 sample of faculty members and 10 sample of HR managers were tested. Cronbach's Alpha reliability co-efficient

normally ranges between 0 and 1, however; there is actually no lower limit to the co-efficient. The closer Cronbach's Alpha co-efficient is to 1.00, the greater is the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

3. **Validity Test Analysis:** After passing the above test, the overall study was conducted where the data is then complied in the required format. Data pre-processing is performed to check any outliers falling beyond 1-5 rating against each factor response and to fill the missing values of the responses by using KNN technique. After the completion of data pre-processing an equal justice can be examined for the factor under consideration for two categories of respondents i.e. 600 students, 90 faculty members and 30 HR Managers.
4. **Co-linearity Test:** To identify the relationship between various parameters and their total effect by using bi-variate correlation is used. The Co-linearity test is to identify any duplicity among the parameters which reveals their dependency. The Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient r is used to determine this test.
5. **Descriptive Analysis:** Based the percentage of the 5-point Likert's scale a graphical representation can provide a clear amount of percentage which agrees the fact under consideration. The comparative results of the responses received from students, faculty members and HR managers can also be tabulated to determine the facts numerically.
6. **Inferential Analysis:** One Way ANOVA Test for given dimension between the group of students, faculties and HR managers is used for Hypothesis testing. Using the interpretations determined in inferential analysis, an overall conclusion is drawn so as to support the hypothetical statement under consideration.

SPSS Table:

One Way ANOVA test using SPSS tool provides an ANOVA table, the 6th column of Sig. provides the p. value which depends on the F value of the 5th column. We can set the following rules at 5% level of significance:

If p value >0.05 , then the model is non-significant model and support the statement of the null hypothesis. *There is no relationship between Campus recruitment of students and COVID 19 effect on the overall market.* Hence they support the fact under null hypothesis.

If p value ≤ 0.05 , then the model is significant model to determine the statement of alternative hypothesis. This means that *Campus recruitment of students is correlated with the COVID 19 effect on the overall market.* Hence they support the fact under alternative hypothesis.

Graphical Representation: Correlation with COVID 19 effect on the overall market

Here the researcher has prepared graphs, line graphs & charts considering the nature of the data and study.

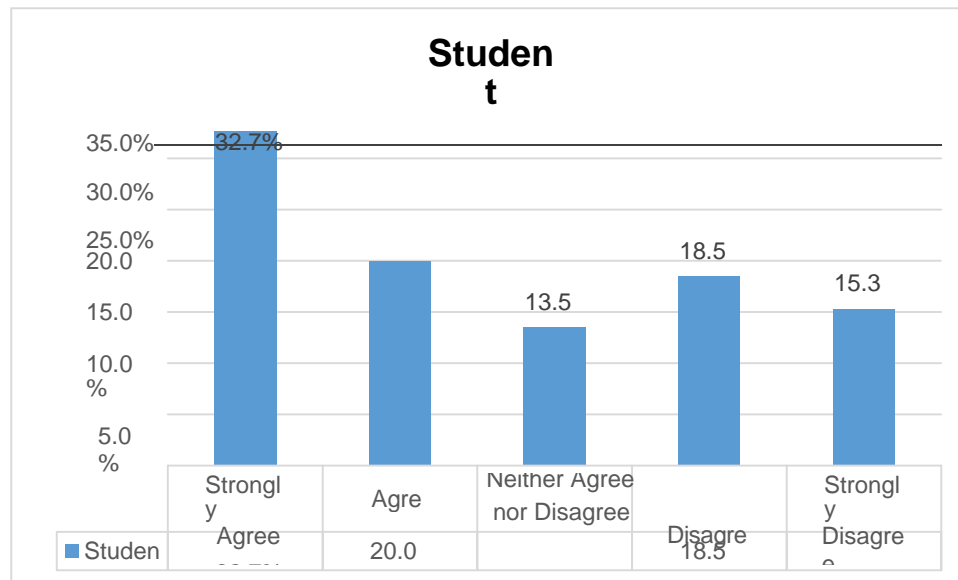


Fig. 1 Response received from students on COVID 19 effect on the overall market

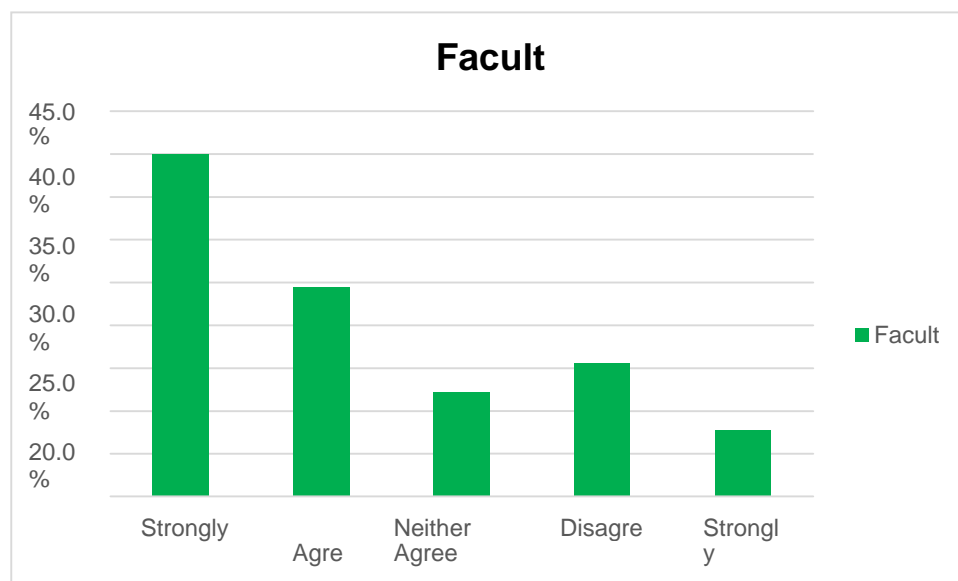


Fig. 2 Response received from Faculties on COVID 19 effect on the overall market

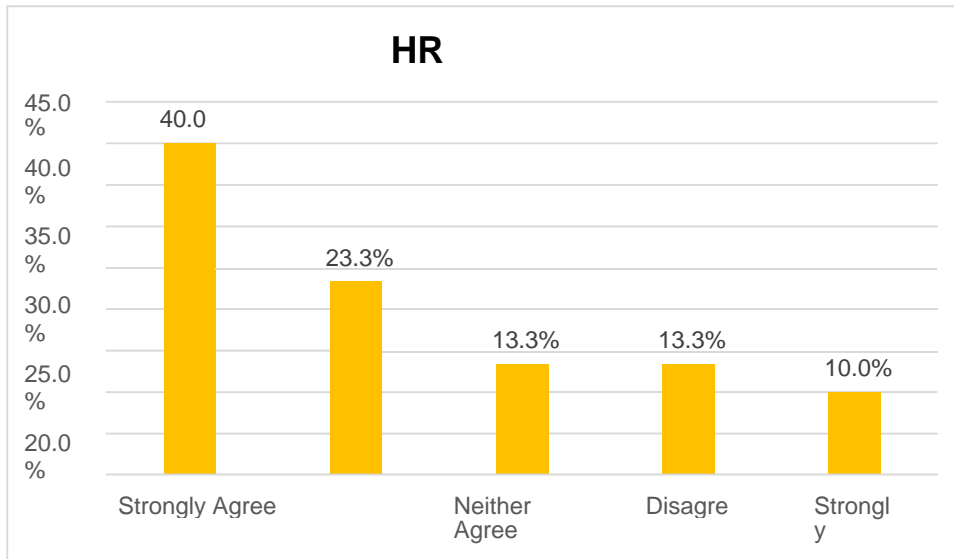


Fig. 3 Response received from HR Managers on COVID 19 effect on the overall market Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis “There is no relationship between Campus recruitment of students and COVID 19 effect on the overall market” one-way ANOVA test is taking type of respondents as dependent variable and factors representing effect of COVID 19 on the overall market as fixed factors where following results were obtained:

Anova Test

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|--------------|
| COVID 19 has changed the campus recruitment scenario | Between Groups | 13.226 | 2 | 6.613 | 3.119 | 0.045 |
| | Within Groups | 1520.42 | 717 | 2.121 | | |
| | Total | 1533.64 | 719 | | | |
| Companies have kept their offers on hold due to COVID 19 | Between Groups | 9.145 | 2 | 4.572 | 2.489 | 0.481 |
| | Within Groups | 1317.29 | 717 | 1.837 | | |
| | Total | 1326.43 | 719 | | | |
| Companies have cancelled their campus visits due to Corona Virus outbreak | Between Groups | 1.582 | 2 | 0.791 | 0.53 | 0.049 |
| | Within Groups | 1069.66 | 717 | 1.492 | | |
| | Total | 1071.24 | 719 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|---------|-----|--------|-------|--------------|
| Number of companies conducting campus recruitment have decreased | Between Groups | 10.653 | 2 | 5.326 | 2.942 | 0.035 |
| | Within Groups | 1298.15 | 717 | 1.811 | | |
| | Total | 1308.8 | 719 | | | |
| Companies have reduced their intake for campus recruitment | Between Groups | 9.862 | 2 | 4.931 | 3.408 | 0.034 |
| | Within Groups | 1037.58 | 717 | 1.447 | | |
| | Total | 1047.44 | 719 | | | |
| Quality of jobs have gone down due to COVID 19 | Between Groups | 3.839 | 2 | 1.919 | 1.173 | 0.031 |
| | Within Groups | 1172.99 | 717 | 1.636 | | |
| | Total | 1176.83 | 719 | | | |
| Our institute has shifted to virtual campus placements process during the COVID 19 pandemic | Between Groups | 4.803 | 2 | 2.402 | 1.703 | 0.018 |
| | Within Groups | 1010.96 | 717 | 1.41 | | |
| | Total | 1015.77 | 719 | | | |
| Our institute effectively used technology and virtual meeting tools for virtual campus recruitment process during COVID 19 | Between Groups | 13.361 | 2 | 6.681 | 3.976 | 0.019 |
| | Within Groups | 1204.59 | 717 | 1.68 | | |
| | Total | 1217.95 | 719 | | | |
| Our institute effectively coordinated with the students for the virtual campus recruitment process | Between Groups | 4.65 | 2 | 2.325 | 1.396 | 0.248 |
| | Within Groups | 1194.45 | 717 | 1.666 | | |
| | Total | 1199.1 | 719 | | | |
| Our institute used remote proctored screening assessments to screen the candidates remotely for placements | Between Groups | 27.011 | 2 | 13.506 | 7.358 | 0.001 |
| | Within Groups | 1316.09 | 717 | 1.836 | | |
| | Total | 1343.1 | 719 | | | |
| COVID 19 has reduced the number | Between Groups | 3.322 | 2 | 1.661 | 1.04 | 0.354 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---------|-----|-------|--------|--------------|
| of companies of international repute for campus recruitment | Within Groups | 1144.99 | 717 | 1.597 | | |
| | Total | 1148.31 | 719 | | | |
| COVID 19 has reduced the | Between Groups | 52.319 | 2 | 26.16 | 15.712 | 0.00 |
| number of companies of national repute for campus recruitment | Within Groups | 1193.79 | 717 | 1.665 | | |
| | Total | 1246.11 | 719 | | | |
| Job offers are reduced after COVID 19 pandemic | Between Groups | 3.474 | 2 | 1.737 | 1.009 | 0.036 |
| | Within Groups | 1234.25 | 717 | 1.721 | | |
| | Total | 1237.73 | 719 | | | |

The above table shows the F-value and significance value (p value) obtained in case of factors representing the COVID 19 effect on the overall market. It is found from the above table that in case of factors like offers on hold due to COVID 19, cancellation of campus visits, reduction in the intake of students by companies, the sig. value obtained is less than the alpha value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) and mean values are between 2.5 and 3.5. Also, for the factors like COVID 19 has reduced the number of companies of national and international repute for campus recruitment along with the reduction in job offers due to COVID 19 pandemic, the test states that there is moderate degree of relationship between Campus recruitment of students and COVID 19 effect on the overall market.

Hence it is concluded that the hypothesis i.e. "There is no relationship between Campus recruitment of students and COVID 19 effect on the overall market" is rejected and alternate hypothesis i.e. "Campus recruitment of students is correlated with the COVID 19 effect on the overall market" is accepted.

6. Conclusion

The hypothesis testing proves that Campus recruitment of students is correlated with the COVID 19 effect on the overall market. The study highlights that COVID 19 has changed the campus recruitment scenario, many companies have kept their offers on hold due to COVID 19, some companies have cancelled their campus visits due to Corona Virus outbreak and companies have reduced their intake for campus recruitment due to COVID 19. The study also suggests that quality of jobs and number of jobs offers have gone down due to COVID 19.

However, whenever there is a storm, some new winners emerge. Due to the prevailing pandemic, the economy around the world is bound to suffer. While this may result in temporary hiatus in hiring, once the pandemic recedes, the country will be required to get back up on its feet by spinning the wheel faster. This might open up a plethora of opportunities and placement prospects for students.

The unforeseen and most threatening pandemic has taught many things to the industry as well as governments. Having learnt so many lessons from this, the approach of industry is going to get metamorphosed. It is likely to be more unfavorable for on the front of recruitment. The writing is already there on the wall. Thus, the academic institutions will have to gear up to face the challenges in the wake of this development.

The study suggests that many educational institutions have started looking for online internships and training programmes for their students. To maintain continuity in education, contribution to the thought leadership is the need of the hour. Organizations aiming to recruit this season are increasingly shifting to virtual campus placements, as they face significant challenges with their traditional campus recruitment schedules due to COVID-19. With the pandemic disrupting regular campus hiring drives this season, virtual platforms are serving as imperative tools and a solution to conduct campus placements digitally while maintaining the social distancing protocols.

Institutes have already switched to online platforms for management of their placement-related activities, including training, Pre-placement Talks, written tests and even interviews. Online Assessment Programmes conducted during Campus Placement Process has proved to be unique and innovative way of not only engaging the students but also providing them the required training. It provides instantaneous solutions, as it keeps the students updated on the current market situation. Customized formats serve the distinctive needs of institutes as well as the students. Online assessment formats like remote proctored screening assessments are proving to be decent test experience as these online platforms use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning tools to help make informed decisions. Many educational institutions and universities are now using such beneficial solutions for the student's community.

Majority of the companies are utilizing their HR tech solutions to conduct virtual interviews for their hiring needs. Engineering and Management Institutes that have adapted rapidly to the current situation by providing creative solutions to their students are really an inspiration for the education industry. With two-third of our country's population below the age of 35, we must remember that India shall progress only when our students make a remarkable progress.

7. Recommendations

Under the stressful and testing circumstances, it is imperative for the industry as well as institutions, to tighten the belts and come out of traditional mindset. The situation demands more innovative approach, more competence and hard work, enrichment with training, improvement in the skill set and bridging the gap between demand and supply in respect of quality.

- a. **Government support:** For the revival of the industry, the government support in respect of policy and fiscal front is most vital. It will naturally trickle down to all the spheres of life including campus recruitment. Although government support is like 'sanjivani' to the industry, it must not depend entirely on this. They will have to take the initiative on their part for the revival. For this, first and foremost thing is to come out of fear psychosis and take the bold yet

pragmatic steps in respect of business process reorganisation, appropriate training of the manpower, innovations in every sphere and cost savings.

- b. **Customer Centric Approach:** In these challenging times the industry will have align itself in the customer centric mode rather than rely on the thrust on marketing and pump the products of the choice of industry in the market. These recommendations are proposed as the recruitment scenario is by and large dependant on the health of the industry. It is not an independent parameter but hugely corelated to the industry. If industry revives, the recruitment scenario is bound to improve. On the part of institutions too many improvements and transformations are overdue. The most paramount of this is the improvement in the skillsets and competence of the students as per demand of industry. They should firmly bear in mind that the shaping and sizing the student is not an independent process. They cannot do it at their own sweet will. They have to always align with the demand factor prevailing in the market.
- c. **Training:** Training of the teachers is the most neglected part in most of academic institutions barring some elite institutions like IITs, IIMs and NITs etc. Many of the self-funded, private institutions are criminally neglecting this vitally important aspect. Cost incurred on the faculty improvement is not a burden it. It is gainful investment. It definitely pays back in the long run.
- d. **Industry -Institution Interaction:** It is the utterly neglected aspect. Instead of encouraging it, the academia is trying to prevent it with extra zeal. It is most unfortunate and tragic part that the academicians are vehemently blocking the entry of the highly experienced, interested and duly qualified personnel from industry to enter in the academic field and treating them like a foe and guarding their forts. It is not a figment of imagination. It is minutely observed and experienced o numerous occasions by the authors of this paper. Not only this the students also hardly get any exposure to industry and working filed barring some cosmetic and ceremonial visits to industry. These are just to fulfil the norms and not in true spirits. The most surprising fact is there are so many so-called academicians who have never seen the industry of significant size and importance in their entire lifespan but they are teaching it merely on their bookish strength. The academic institutions need to update themselves from time to time in respect of the latest developments in the industry and their needs.

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