

Demographic Variables Impacting Employability in Professional Courses

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(*Equal responsibility)

Abstract: *As teachers of Humanities at a privately financed academic institution, one is always keenly aware of the outcomes required at different levels of accreditation. Frequently one works with a goal, proposing a plan towards achieving it. Attainment of desired ends is not a guarantee. If the proof of pudding is in the eating, then it is only fair for the stakeholders to assess outcomes and reverse engineer a path that could guarantee certain results, instead of academically trusting processes to work. The premise being that a successful student of a professional course is one who is accepted in the industry. Towards this end, the paper takes the outcome of certain programs in terms of their student placement records obtained from the college the students attended, and endeavours to filter out the common factors that are present. This endeavour tests certain hypotheses in the author's minds regarding demographic influences that could be contributors to the process. The findings of the survey conducted, to elicit real - time responses from student stakeholders, both employed as well as unemployed, unearth some remarkable findings that colleges may want to bear in mind when they admit students to tier 2 colleges in India, especially West Bengal.*

Keywords: demographic influences, employability, medium of instruction, socio - economic factors, gender bias.

1. Introduction

Learners of EFL and Business Communication in India are rarely homogenous in their background. Their medium of instruction in school, their financial background, their family configuration - all differ substantially. Despite the equitable dissemination of knowledge and training in college, their employability outcomes differ. Oftentimes, the same teacher - facilitator using the same resources, yields different learning outcomes in class. In an environment where 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating', employability and employment/placement statistics hold considerable weightage in the considerations for being rated 'successful' as a program of study. A college or institution of higher learning in India is considered renowned only when the alumni are absorbed by the industry in great numbers or the alumni travel to their next higher destination of further study/research. As facilitators of Business English and Soft Skills in a tier 2 Engineering and Management College in East India, one often wondered if the teaching or training fell short when faced with unplaced learners at the end of a professional course of study. After all, the industry's endorsement is crucial to the continued validity of the program, indeed, of the institution in totality. It was under these circumstances that it was felt by the authors of the paper to try and elicit from the learners themselves if they were indeed so diverse in their context that the same content that they were taught and trained with, evoked different outcomes in different persons. Thence came the proposal to conduct a survey across learners of EFL, Business Communication and Soft Skills (often the same cohort) to determine their contexts hoping that there would emerge a pattern whereby one could map the extrinsic factors outside the classroom that impact the teaching - learning inside it and contribute to the differences in the outcomes of said teaching - learning (T - L) processes.

The hypothesis that the authors commenced the survey with, was of finding the underprivileged being the laggards in the placement process. One feared that the economically challenged learner born of semi - educated parents and having to contend with less resources due to a large family size, would be slower, and unprepared to absorb the learning inputs shared by the facilitator and hence would be a challenge to place after course completion. It was also hypothesized that perhaps learners from vernacular medium schooling backgrounds find it a challenge to master English and hence take a hit when recruitment processes are carried out in English. Because while the finishing point of a study program is obviously fixed by the University timelines, there is no way to gauge the level of the finished products.

The End Semester University Examinations in India, are a test of theoretical knowledge with some level of applicability, at best. The only real test of a professional's true worth is when s/he is endorsed by the industry. Towards this end it was very important to map the tangible as well as intangible forces that were influencing a learner's ability to absorb and utilize the full impact of the delivered content in class. If indeed extraneous forces or factors beyond the classroom walls were responsible for learning outcomes, they should be immediately realized, recognized and managed to the best of a facilitator's capacity.

2. Literature Review

Quite a few empirical surveys have studied demographic influences on learning outcomes, the world over. However, they are largely focused on online learning outcomes and traces the influence of demography during the times of COVID 19. A case in point is the study by Ellen Chung, Geetha Subramaniam, Laura Christ Dass, with their paper titled 'Demographic Factors & Online Learning experience' Asian Journal of Universities, Vol 16, Number2, July 2020 (<https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v16i2.10294>). The work

deals with a study conducted in Malaysia with 399 students. It was found that more female students were eager to participate in online classes than their male counterparts. It was also found that more Degree students were interested in online learning than their Diploma counterparts. The issue of connectivity was one that emerged as the greatest roadblock for Degree students while comprehensibility was the overriding constraint towards the path of online learning among Diploma students. LMS (Learning Management System) and SDL (Self Directed Learning) were seen as the preferred tools to continue education during Lockdown. 'The role of demographics in online learning: A decision - tree based approach' by SamanRizvi, Bart Raeinties, Shakeel Ahmed Khoja, (Elsevier, Computers & Education, Vol137, Aug2019, pp32 - 47) discusses research that has shown online learners' performance to have a strong association with their demographic characteristics such as regional belonging, socio - economic standing, education level, age, gender and disability status. Most research studies profile learners and their characteristics in order to assess learning outcomes. However, the current research attempts to explore the dynamic impact of demographic characteristics on learning outcomes as they progress through the course. Sarang Bhola and Sunil S. Dhanawade, in their paper 'Demographic Factors and Employability Skills of Management Students' (ISBN: 978 - 93 - 83796 - 43 - 4, Dec2016) mention that the National Knowledge Commission, in 2009, held that command over the English Language is perhaps the most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and societal opportunities. N. R. Narayana Murthy, founder chairman of Infosys Technologies Limited opined in 2009 that a major leadership challenge in the present day business leaders is to successfully address diverse global audiences simultaneously and suggests that in such situations '... communication is most impactful and yields best results when you use simple, direct and powerful statements to convey our ideas'. This paper traced the impact of the MBA Program on the employability of the MBA students. In 'The Impact of Demographic Characteristics on Academic Performances: Face to face learning versus Distance Learning implemented to prevent the spread of Covid 19, Prof Ghaleb. A. El Refae, Dr. AbdoulayeKaba and Dr ShorouqEletter, (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v22i1.5031>, ISSN: 1492 - 3831, Feb 2021) the authors evaluated the influence of learner gender, college and status of students on their preference for F2F or DL modes of instruction. DL mode yielded better results because of availability of internet resources, recorded lessons, unlimited access to study material, convenience in timing, etc, when compared to F2F. 'The effects of gender, educational level and personality on online learning' (<https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-021-00252-3>) written by Zhonggen Yu (International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, Article 14 (2021) studied the effects of educational levels, gender and personality traits on online learning outcomes. It was concluded that PG learners outperformed UG learners in online learning. Strong willed, extroverted and open - minded personalities appeared to do best at online learning. It was also a derivation from the empirical data that collaborative learning which took place during online teaching - learning processes was found

to be most beneficial. This paper repeatedly stresses the fact that very few demographic influence studies have taken place with respect to learning outcomes. An important area of information derived from this study was that, there was no noticeable influence of 'gender' on online learning outcomes. This is in direct contradiction to the findings in the paper by Chung et al (2020) conducted in Malaysia. Vinu Sherimon, Leena Francis, Sherimon P. C, Disha Devassy and WalidAboraya in their paper 'Exploring the impact of learners' demographic characteristics on course completion and dropout in massive open online courses' in the International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah, [Jan 2022 10 (1), pp 149 - 160] [doi: 10.29121/granthaalayah.v10.11.2022.4469] studies the course completion rates vis a vis the demographics of the students undertaking them. Using the Chi square test, four variables of gender, marital status, age and education levels were correlated with course completion/ dropout rates. It was found that gender has an impact on course completion/ dropout, but age and marital status did not have any significant impact.

Hypotheses that aim to be tested in this paper:

- Employability in young Indian adults is directly related to medium of schooling, with English medium schooled students being recruited faster than vernacular medium schooled students.
- Employability is also related to parents' education background.
- Employability is related to parents' economic status
- It is also influenced by family size - smaller family size correlates to greater probability of students being better prepared for and successful at, Placements.
- Geographical location of the students' family also influences student success at the job market, with urban students doing better at the interviews.
- Employability is also related to the professional status of *both* parents.
- A moderately, not extremely, good student in academics does better at Placements.
- Gender impacts employability, more eligible men are placed than eligible women.

The **Methodology** of the paper involved a Google Form Survey of the effects of the demographic influences on learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and their impact on employability. Student responses were solicited from UG and PG Level students affiliated to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology (MAKAUT), West Bengal, India.

The batches of students taken into consideration for this were classes of 2021, 2022 and 2023. The participating batches in the survey were from B. Tech/ MBA & MCA programs of study. The survey is aimed at finding the influences and their subsequent effects on the learners' employability outcomes. Students specifically from the final year (unplaced as well as placed) from the 2023 batch along with the passed out batches of 2021 & 2022 participated in this survey. The survey questionnaire comprised ten questions, which contribute to an understanding of the demographic influences on employability. The number of students participating in the survey was 237, of which 139 are already employed or have an Offer Letter upon which

they will join after their final Semester exams and 2 students have become Entrepreneurs.

Separate data mapping was done in terms of employed and unemployed students in order to find out the factors that perhaps contributed to their employment status. Of the total 237 responses that the survey received, 139 respondents were employed, 2 were entrepreneurs (considered as employed) while the rest were awaiting placement. Of the 141 employed, 123 were in the Undergraduate Students Category.

3. Discussion

The Google Form for Survey elicited some information which includes data pertaining to employed students that will be looked at first.

Questions 1 through 3 are primarily to collect contact details and descriptive information regarding the departmental identity of respondents. A visual summary of the students' profile is shown below.

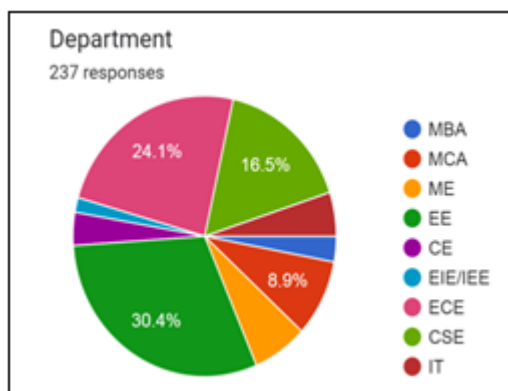


Figure 1: Department wise distribution of students

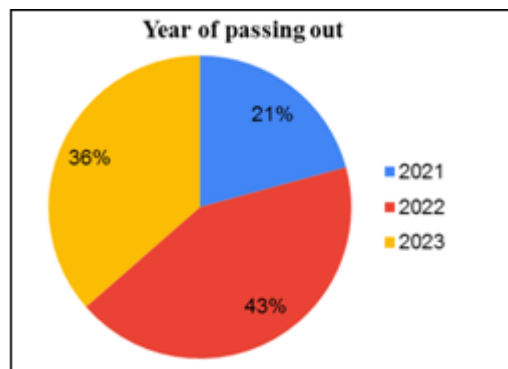


Figure 2: Year wise distribution of students

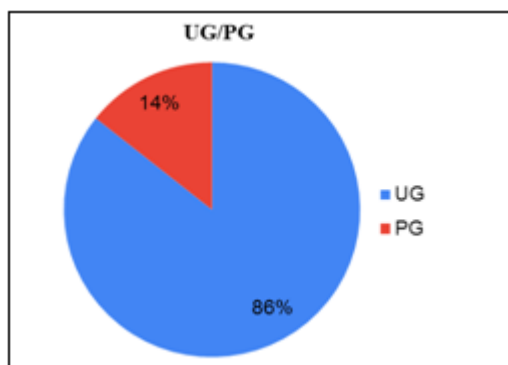


Figure 3: Share of degree attained by student

Q4. What is your (respondent's) status currently?

Overview of Findings: 139 students from the band of 237 respondents responded that they have been placed and 2 responded as opting to be Entrepreneurs.

- Year 2021 had 50 respondents of which 34 were placed resulting in about 68% of the sample being placed.
- Year 2022 had 101 respondents of which 68 candidates were placed featuring 67% (approx) of the respondents being placed.
- In the year 2023 the participating number of students has been 85 of which 38 have been placed, resulting in 45% (approx) placement from the given sample size. Values for 2023 are not fully reflective of the final numbers because this is a Placement Year that is Live and in progress.

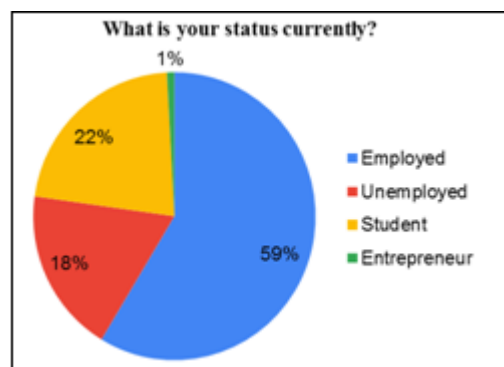


Figure 4: Current status of respondents

Analysis of Findings: The placement statistics, being decent, gives the study a boost in the legitimacy of the response analyses going forward.

Discussion of Analysis: It is premature (the placements being in process) to deduce from the number of placed students if there have been certain influencing trends in the demography. However, one may hypothesize that there were definitely factors of family education and income that would emerge as influencing factors, from the response analyses.

Q5. What is your (students') salary/pay band?

From the 141 students who are employed, across all the 3 years (2021 to 2023) it is observed that 102 students are in the earning pay band of 20K to 40K per month. This is out of — - respondents who are placed.

- The survey reveals that, 20 students are in the 10K - 20K/month pay band
- 62 students have a monthly payband of 20 - 30k
- 40 students are on the payband of 30 - 40k/month
- 12 students are in the 40K - 50K/month and
- 7 students are above the 50K/month pay band.

The pie chart below gives the percentage share, among employed students, of each pay band.

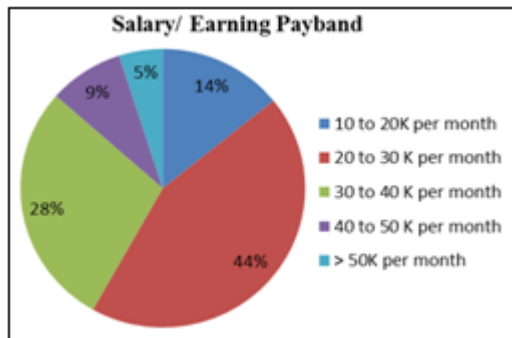


Figure 5: Salary distribution among employed respondents

Discussion of Analysis: From the above - mentioned data, it is also noteworthy to know that, the 7 students who are in the pay band ranging above 50K/Month, are majorly from English medium background (5/7) and also from the Urban area (2/7).

This finding also hints at a very certain deduction that Urban setting with English as a medium of instruction facilitates the placement chances.

Q6. What is the academic background of your (students’) guardians?

The observation in this category reveals that around 71.6% of the guardians of the 141 employed students are at least graduates and 64% of the guardians of the 96 unemployed respondents are also at least graduates.

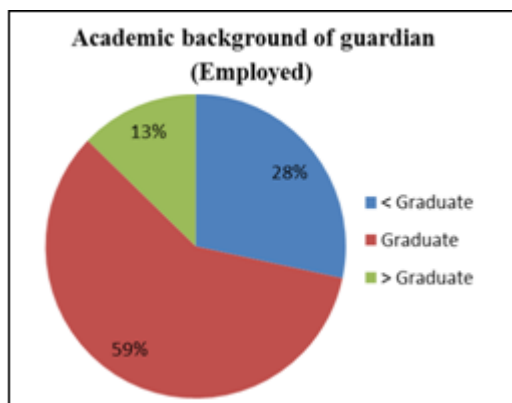


Figure 6: Academic background of guardian (employed)

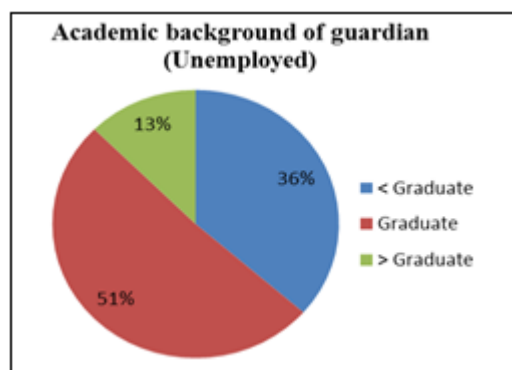


Figure 7: Academic background of guardian (unemployed)

Analysis of Findings: Guardians’ academic qualification appears to have an impact on the employability of students as the percentage of graduate guardians of employed students is 8% higher than that of guardians of the unemployed students.

scussion of Analysis: Parents educational background to some extent definitely influences the overall performance of a candidate. Therefore, one may deduce that placement ratios of professional institutions may improve if one does a discrete background check on the employment status of the guardians. Afterall, teachers only impact half of a student’s life. Ambient nurturing and values embedded make the learner who they eventually are, in totality.

Q7. Are both guardians earning members of the family?

In the case of 141 employed students, it has been observed that 82% (approx) guardians are not from the double income group.

Again, in the case of the 96 unemployed students, it is found that around 92% of the guardians do not belong to the double income band.

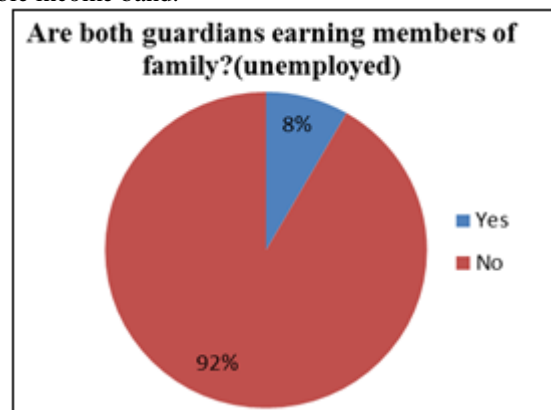


Figure 8: Earning members of family (employed)

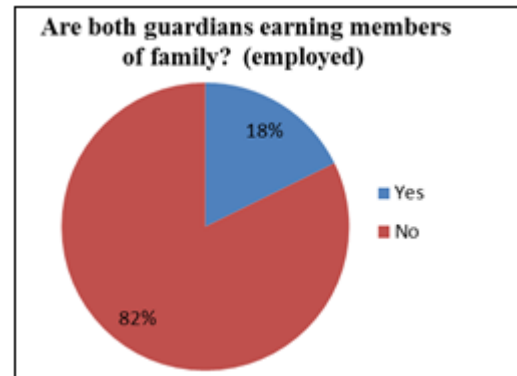


Figure 9: Earning members of family (unemployed)

Analysis of Findings: Observations yield that around 17.7% of the guardians from the 141 employed cohort are from the double income group, whereas only 8% of the guardians are from the double income group in case of the 96 unemployed students.

Discussion of Analysis: The initial hypothesis was that economic stability and comfort is achieved when both guardians are employed. Both guardians working was believed to have a positive influence on the employability rates of students than the other cohort whose guardians are not both employed. Better financial resources were believed to result in better nurturing, coaching opportunities being made available for the students. Not only is it about additional corpus of finances that make the difference, it was hypothesized that what gives employed guardians’ wards an

edge in life are the varied rational, professional and social networks that any working guardian/guardians automatically possess. Therefore, it was believed that, there is not only a tangible but also an intangible benefit to being a ward of working guardians.

However, this finding disproves our hypothetical premise.

82.3% of guardians of employed students comprise single income families.

The plausible reason for this is perhaps one guardian at home becomes an advantage in that s/he is able to monitor the appropriate utilisation of available resources. The student, left to her/himself may not optimally utilize time and resources if left to manage the same alone. In this scenario, resources, even if stretched, become well utilized.

This, however brings to the fore the oft - contended issue of whether both guardians working outside the home is for the betterment of the next generation, which is outside the present scope of this paper.

Q8. What is the family income of your guardian per month?

Analysis for Employed Students’ guardians: Family income of a guardian per month was categorized under 5 ranges starting from less than 20K to more than 50K. 32% of the respondents’ guardians earn below 20k/month. 40% of the guardians earn between 20k and 50k/month (13%, 14% and 13% respectively for each 10k pay band starting at 20k/m to 50k/m). Only 28% of the respondents’ guardians earn more than 50k/month.

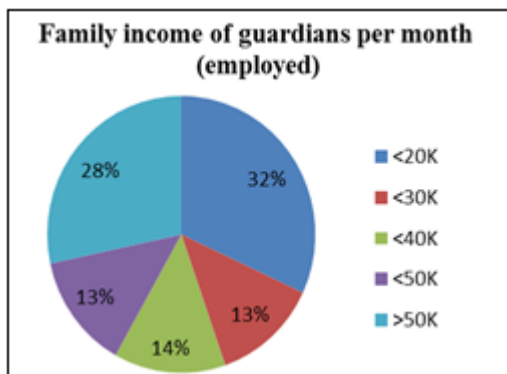


Figure 10: Share of family income (employed)

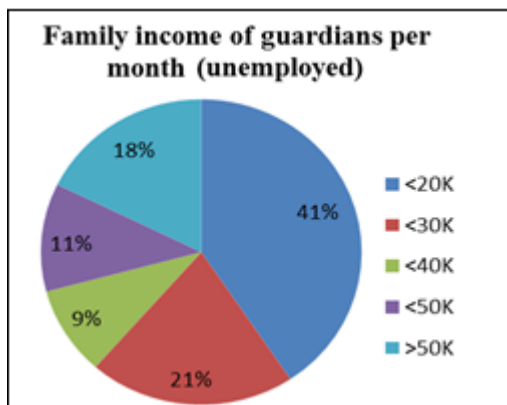


Figure 11: Share of family income (unemployed)

Analysis of Unemployed Students’ Guardians: Here, 41% of guardians earn less than 20k/month, 41% earn between 20k and 50k (each 10k band having 21%, 9%, 11% in the 20 - 30k/m, 30 - 40k/m and 40 - 50k/m respectively) while 18% earning more than 50k/month.

Discussion of Analysis: The observation here is very interesting, which indicates that students who have been placed are majorly coming from a background of extremes, where 32% is hailing from the <20K slab and 28% are from >50K income group, and the inference that can be drawn from the above data may suggest that the income of guardian may have motivated both these extreme groups of respondents. In the first case, the 32% students might have been motivated to get a job in order to support their family, because in most of these cases it is seen that students generally take education loan to complete their degree, so a haste of mitigating the loan amount also acts as a stimulus to get a job offer. On the other hand, the respondents belonging to the >50K per month background can be deduced as ambitious and focused who are used to a particular type of lifestyle, and feel the urge of owning it from the very first day of placement.

Q9. Is your home address under a Corporation / Municipality / Panchayat?

Discussion of Findings: The data represents the difference in the employability rate of the respondents hailing from Municipality/ Corporation (urban area), and Panchayat (rural area).

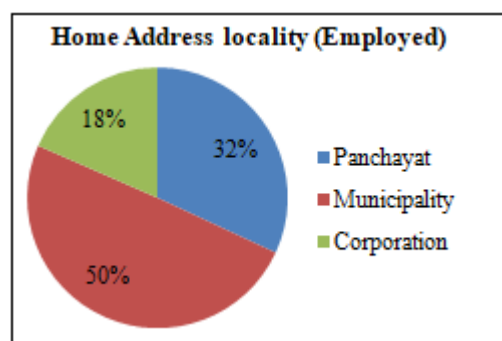


Figure 12: Home Address locality (employed)

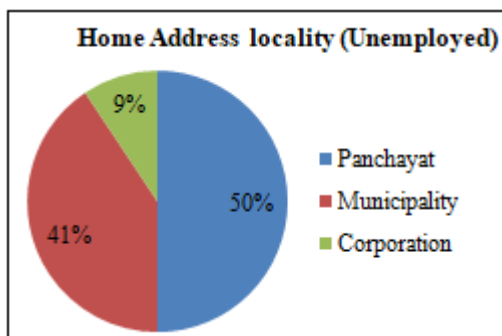


Figure 13: Home Address Locality (Unemployed)

Analysis: The above pie chart represents that 68% of the employed respondents are from urban areas, whereas 32% are from panchayats (village councils) - a huge difference of 36%. In the case of unemployed respondents, it is observed that the share of rural and urban respondents is equal.

Derivation: The observations clearly are that the student’s socio - economic environment plays a significant role in case of employability of the respondents. In urban areas the scope, facilities and the awareness among the residents is more conducive to generating an employable mindset, and an awareness about professional skill sets. There is access to education facilities, upcoming technology, tutorials, counselling centres and many such resources that the rural areas lack. These factors lead to the deduction that urban residents enjoy more facilities and exposure as compared to rural residents. However, in an age where digital resources are gaining ground fast, this equation may cease to be skewed in favour of cities. Though quite some time away now, accessibility of knowledge and tutelage may be democratically available across geographies. The fact that 68% of employed students come from homes that are situated in urban geographies, in itself lends to the deduction that, as on date, there is a definite geographical and demographical impact on employability - in favour of urbanity.

Q 10. Your medium of instruction in school?

Discussion: The data derived reflects that the medium of instruction in school plays a significant role. In case of the employed, the respondents with English medium as their instruction in school are better performers at the recruiters’ table. 66% of students employed have studied in English when in school.

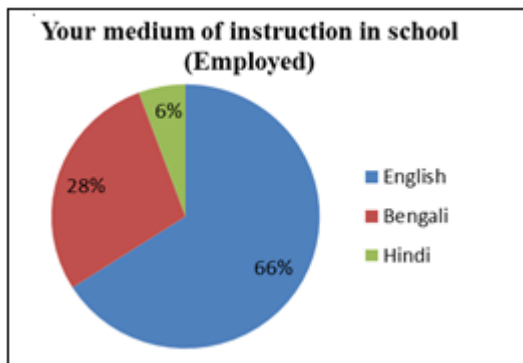


Figure 14: Medium of instruction (employed)

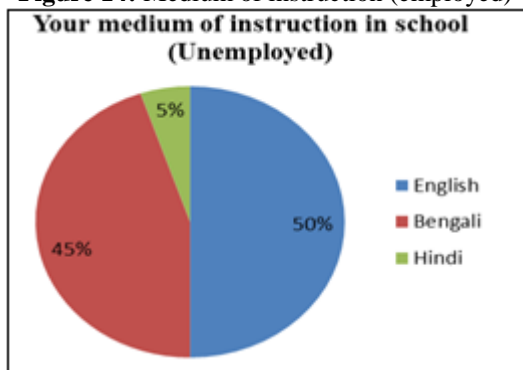


Figure 15: Medium of instruction (unemployed)

Analysis: 66% of respondents with English as an instruction in school are employed whereas in case of Bengali and Hindi as a media of instruction, it is equally distributed.

Derivation: The derived data clearly states that media of instruction at school has a significant role to play in generating employability skills. English as a medium of instruction helps students to face the competitive market and

follow the instructions as they come. Disputed variously as a language of dominion or a subtractor of regional/indigenous languages, by default English is the lingua franca of the business world, being the language of technology and innovation and the worldwide web. It is also a scientific fact that the intellect that is required to master a foreign language translates as intellect to absorb new ideas and knowledge that is seen as an advantage at the recruiter’s table.

Q11. Your overall CGPA throughout your academic career?

Discussion: The derived data reflects that in case of employed the overall CGPA between six to seven seven to eight shows a remarkable jump. Most of the respondents have a CGPA more than eight and none of the respondents have a CGPA less than six.

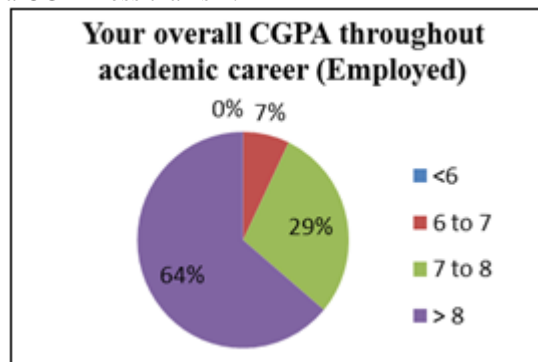


Figure 16: Overall CGPA (employed)

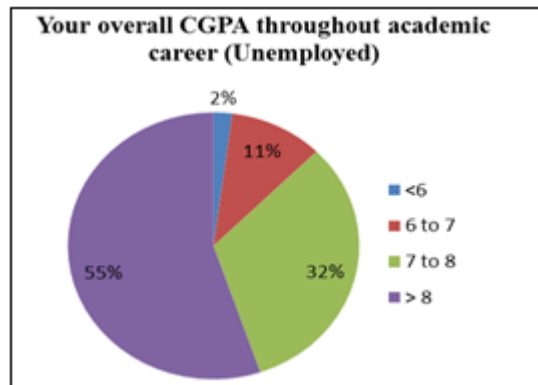


Figure 17: Overall CGPA (unemployed)

Analysis: It is observed that zero employed respondents have a CGPA less than six. Only 7% of them have CGPA between 6 to 7. the percentage of 7% and 29% reflect a huge jump. 64% of the employed respondents have more than eight as their CGPA. In case of unemployed respondents, only 2 respondents have a CGPA that is less than 6. 10 respondents have a CGPA between 6 and 7, 31 respondents have CGPAs between 7 to 8 and 53 have more than 8.

Derivation: It is evident from the 63.8% cohort of CGPA above 8 points (>80/100) that students who are academically sound are those that are employed. The basis of recruitment continues to be attitude, skill and knowledge (ASK). Students who are better than average in their studies are evidently in possession of appropriate priorities in life. They also possess a sense of discipline to manifest their goals through rigorous efforts. A consistent timeline of academic achievements is an undoubted pointer to the commitment

level and executive abilities of the student. This is one of the key features of employability the world over.

Q12. How many siblings do you have?

Discussion: The data attempts to look at the impact siblings have on employability of a respondent.

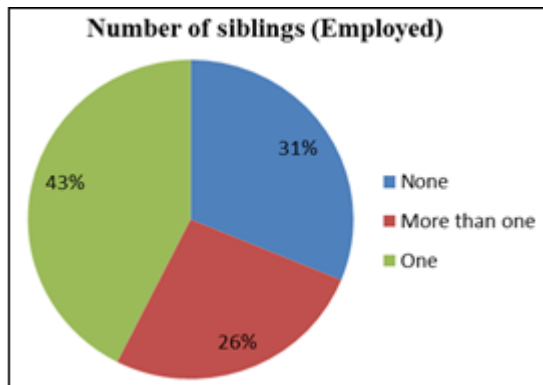


Figure 18: Number of siblings (employed)

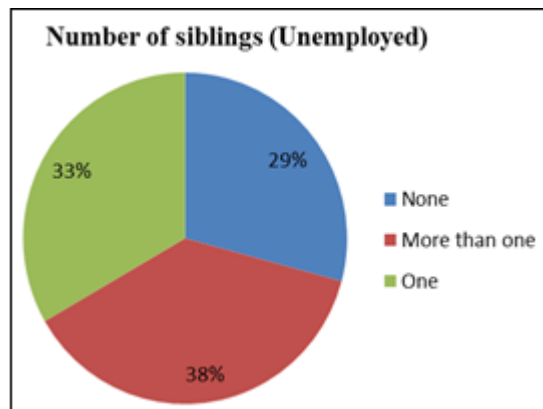


Figure 19: Number of siblings (unemployed)

Analysis: For the employed respondents, 31% have no siblings, 43% have one and 26% have more than 1. For the unemployed, 29% have none; 33% have one and 38% have more than 1.

Derivation: From the above data it can be derived that having one sibling actually contributes to significant positive changes in life trajectory. Perhaps the impact is because of the fact that having a buddy to share life’s ups and downs with. ‘Two heads are better than one - is true in more ways than one.

Equally significant is the finding that more than 30% of employed students do not have any siblings. This is probably because of a single minded economic and emotional focus on the single child by the guardians.

Q 13. Your chosen gender?

Discussion: The derived data represents the gender of the respondents. How does gender play a role in the employability factor?

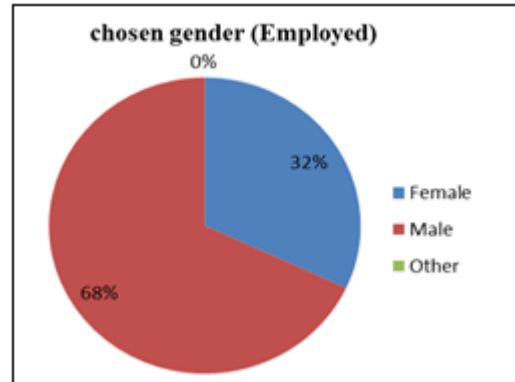


Figure 20: Gender Division (employed)

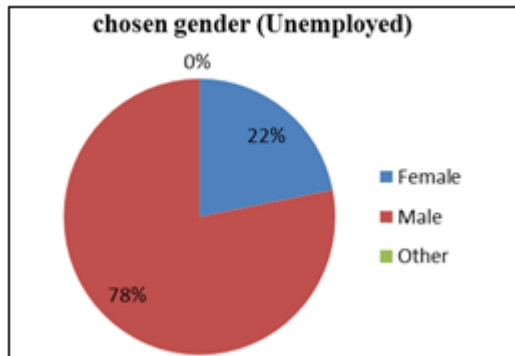


Figure 21: Gender Division (unemployed)

Analysis: Out of the 141 employed respondents it can be seen 45 are females and 96 are male. On the other hand in case of unemployed 21 are female and 75 are males of the total 96.

Derivation: The data shows that there is a gender disparity in the intakes at every academic institution in India. Female students are routinely outnumbered by male at every level. This inequality as well as disbalance is therefore naturally reflected in employment statuses as well.

Additional Analysis of data pertaining to Unemployed Students:

Q3. Level of Respondents - UG/PG

Discussion - A total of 94 students were found to be unemployed, with 77 of them belonging to the Undergraduate category.

Derivation: It appears that the UG Level is one where maximum placements are expected to occur. Fewer placements occur after the Masters Level.

Q4 asks the respondents whether they are employed. The response is ‘no’.

Q5 does not pertain to the respondents as the salary band they may be categorized under is irrelevant.

Q6 asks for the academic background of the guardians of those that are unemployed.

Discussion: Remarkably 63.5% of the respondents’ guardians are graduates and above.

Analysis: Probably the respondents have referred to or shared data pertaining to only the earning member of the family, because the next question reveals that the majority of the respondents have only one member of the two guardians employed.

Derivation: It is difficult to make any unbiased derivations from this information.

Q7 asks whether both members of parents/guardians are employed.

Discussion: 91.6% of the respondents have only one working member in their families.

Derivation: It may be derived that lack of financial resources and professional awareness has led to the student's own lacuna of employability skills.

Q8 asks for information about family income.

Discussion: 61.4% of respondents' guardians earn below INR30k/month.

Derivation: This is one of the functional reasons that lead to paucity of resources in the lives of respondents that, in turn, may have been a contributing factor for the lack of success in the employment scenario.

Q9. This question elicits information regarding the geographical situation of the respondent's home.

Discussion: 50% of the respondents were found to be living in urban and semi - urban areas. This negates the hypothesis that students from rural areas lag behind their urban counterparts when it comes to employability.

Analysis: Notwithstanding the hypothesis that urban respondents have a definite edge in terms of availability of support and resources for training to be professionals, it appears that the availability of resources are now equitably distributed, thanks to internet facilities.

Q10 solicits information about the medium of instruction at school.

Discussion: 50% of the respondents are from an English Medium Schooling background.

Derivation: This goes to show that the medium of instruction at one's school may not be a pivotal factor in determining employability rates, especially if the medium of professional instruction at college has been English for 4 years.

Q11 solicits the respondent's overall CGPA throughout the academic career.

Discussion: 55% of the respondents have over 8 CGPA points in their academic career. This goes to show their academic worth.

Derivation: It may be argued that one's academic worth or curricular knowledge base is not the only factor impacting career success at one's professional zone.

Q12 requests information on the number of siblings of the respondent.

Discussion: 37.5% of the respondents have more than one sibling thereby strengthening the hypothesis that large families are a constraint to individual success.

Derivation: Resources, when modest, are stretched thin when consumers increase. This is one reason that handicaps the traditional Indian Middle Class and leads to inequitable resource allocation. Lack of consumer resources impacts the training and development of a student into a professional.

Q13 solicits the gender nomination/choice of the respondent.

Discussion: In a professional courses college, especially engineering, the number of female students are always lesser than male students.

In this context though, the number of female unemployed students is also much lower. 78% of the male students are seen as unemployed. Female unemployed students are much less at 22%.

Some general observations from the data are:

- 1) The number of English Medium Schooled Employed respondents is 96 out of 141 respondents (68%)
- 2) The number of Bengali Medium Schooled Employed respondents is 40 out of 141 (28.3%)

Limitations of the study:

- 1) *Insufficient data* - It is true that due to paucity of time and accessibility to all students at the college at a single window of time, the data collected (a little more than 200 responses) is reflective of but is definitely not a complete representation of the placement outcomes.
- 2) *Insufficient reach* - Ideally, the paper could have been a summary of all pre - placement students' responses countrywide, so as to come to more specific conclusions regarding the impact of demographics on employability. However, given the constraints of money, time and personal employment reasons (leave etc) the study was limited to the organization the authors were related to.
- 3) *Targeting 2023 pass outs in March, instead of June 2023 did not give us a concrete picture* - As the placement process is still in continuum, it is natural that many of the students who reported themselves as 'unplaced' in our survey would respond differently if requested to respond today. Once again, this paper is reflective of the pertinent and noteworthy trends that are obvious in the survey analyses, despite not being a 100% representation of the clear and final data.
- 4) *Lack of probing* as to how academically unsound parents contributed to the outcomes, as it is awkward to ask paying customers (parents) about the details of whether their academic knowledge, or the lack of it, has been a contributing factor towards their wards' placement status. It is assumed that the less academically brilliant have been spurred by their own

inadequacy to try and channelise their ward's talents better. The converse may also be true. That they are happy with status quo, if ward is still unplaced, and they do not believe that is a failure, merely a temporary postponement of later assured success. From personal opinion of the authors, however, successfully placed parents aspire to spur their wards too, towards similar or better career opportunities.

These limitations have arisen for the present time and will surely be probed to enrich the study further by the end of the academic year.

4. Conclusion

The study in itself has been a novel way of looking at outcomes of professional education in India. Through an overview of trends noticed only with a focus group of our organization of employment, it may be said that the information that has surfaced is broadly reflective of an entire cohort of (semi) cosmopolitan students at the culmination of their professional degrees. If one considers the professional degree to be a gateway to a career, and a mapping of the contributing factors towards successful employment as information to be analysed, then our paper is a step in the right direction. Instead of offering admits to students with only a grade and/or subject criteria, if one could set out a few more parameters for profiling a student before offering her/him an admit, there is a possibility that the educational organization could, indeed, ensure outstanding placements.

The argument that education and placements are mutually exclusive and ought not to be linked in any circumstances may not be true at the ground level in India. Knowledge for the sake of it (akin to 'Gautier's 'art for art's sake) is not something that is pursued at the stage of professional studies. As the name itself precludes, the program is tailored to the industry and the expected outcomes most surely include placements. The paper commenced with the premise that the employability quotient of a student of a professional course depends also on extrinsic factors of the student demography. The geographic area of habitation, the economics that one is imbued with, parental academic worth, along with medium of instruction at school are all equally important contributors towards a student's successful placement at the end of a program. This is not to preclude the importance of knowledge, skill, attitude and general interpersonal attributes that play an integral role in cementing a place in the industry. However, increasingly, professional education is a big equalizer in making these factors equitably accessible to every student in class. The differentiators then become only extraneous, unique factors that influence students' demographic backgrounds.

The premise was that students belonging to middle class families where parents were educated and employed, having a small family size, with graduation being the minimum parent education level, and those from an urban or semi-urban geography would have an edge over the others, at the recruiters' tables.

This did not all hold true at the survey responses analysis. Many of our hypotheses were validated, for example English medium schooled students (at 66%) were seen to be employed more. Smaller families (60% one sibling) were seen to have contributed to more successful students. More successful students came from double income families (82%). More than 70% of parents of successful students come from families where parents are graduates and above, in terms of their academic qualification. In terms of the hypothesis that more students from urban and semi-urban areas, the survey yields the result that 68% of employed student survey respondents are from urban and semi-urban areas.

It is observed that 93 students from the 141 employed band have English as their medium of instruction and

- 48 students from this category have studied in Bengali/Hindi medium.
- 96 students from this category are residents of Corporation/ Municipality.
- 45 respondents are from the Panchayat area.

Though not part of the hypotheses listed in the paper, the respondents' academics also play a part in determining employability, as we see that nearly 64% of employed students bear an academic CGPA of 8 points and above.

The one hypothesis, very close to the author's hearts, that was not validated was that a majority (82%) of the employed students came from single income families. It was a personal quest to look for success stories from families where both parents worked for a living. However, financial abundance of the guardians and the placement success of the wards could not be correlated. Perhaps the stay-at-home parent ensured better utilization of resources for the growth/success of the student.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that the path to success does not start or end with the individual associated with it. Whether it is a child or an adult striving for professional achievements, it is always the ambient environment/previous generation, the socio-economic environment that one is a product of, that plays a crucial role in determining how far one realises the goal. Instead of trying to train a potential artist to be a scientist, if academic institutions could gain some information on the ward's demographics to ascertain how s/he may be nurtured, it would be a faster and shorter route to success.

At the risk of appearing undemocratic, the paper wishes to strongly advocate that academic institutions inculcate an awareness of the background of the learner. Who the student really is, who s/he wants to be and whether s/he is capable of fruitfully engaging in the transition process of a classroom student to an industry professional, are the most pertinent of information. After all, demographic influences play a considerable part in contributing to one's professional outcomes.

5. Future Scope of the Study

- 1) *Gender profiling to get more data* - Future studies on demographic influences impacting employability could

stratify the observations on the basis of gender filtration. It is typical for more boys in India to choose to study an Engineering Program than girls, and hence a gender profiling of responses would definitely be eye-opening and worth the effort.

- 2) *Religious profiling* - to see if any impacts are noticed. Though a constitutionally secular, sovereign democratic Republic, the many religions that thrive in India are immersed to a large extent in their traditions that have defined them since aeons. As such, broadly and in approximation, the general patriarchy of the NorthIndians stymie the academic and career choices of the female students, while the subliminal matriarchy of the SouthernIndians, are liberally encouraging of their female folk to explore the horizon on their own terms, albeit within the Indian construct.

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