



A STUDY ON SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES IN PREMIER INDIAN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the present 21st century era, the term sustainable development and sustainability had become a buzzword across the globe. The business organizations and management education institutions are both not left aside by the deep impact of various sustainability related issues on the economic and social wellbeing of people living in our society. To end poverty, safeguard our planet and ensure fortune for all; the United Nations also came up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the year 2015. The premier management education institutions in India are also playing a very significant role in dealing with various issues related to sustainable development and also in bringing positive changes in the society by embracing and practicing various sustainability initiatives within their institutions. This paper examines and presents an overview of various sustainability initiatives undertaken by premier management education institutions in India. The results of the study show that although premier management institutions in India are acting as beacon of change in our society in terms of carrying out various sustainability initiatives but still there is huge scope for perfection and progression.

KEYWORDS: Sustainability, Management Education, Initiatives, India.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development and sustainability has now become widely discussed topic at almost across all the international platforms, forums, governmental agendas and policies, regulatory and legal frameworks etc. across the globe. One of the most popular and widely cited definition of Sustainable Development is given by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and it defines Sustainable Development as “*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (Brundtland, 1987). Mr. Ban Ki-Moon who was the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations also said that “*At its essence, sustainability means ensuring prosperity and environmental protection without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. A sustainable world is one where people can escape poverty and enjoy decent work without harming the earth’s essential ecosystems and resources, where people can stay healthy and get the food and water they need, where everyone can access clean energy that doesn’t contribute to climate change, where women and girls are afforded equal rights and equal opportunities*” (Hussain, 2015). Thus, we can understand that for achieving a just and equitable society, the concept of sustainable development has now become the need of the hour.

The United Nations also came up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) in the year 2015, which are a universal call to action for ending poverty, protection of our planet and for ensuring peace and prosperity for all people worldwide (Nations, 2015). The universities play a very important role in ensuring

prosperity and economic well-being of any country. Here, the management education institutions also play a very important role in preparing an army of responsible business leaders of tomorrow who will help in bringing positive changes in our society.

In India, the management education institutions are also contributing in fostering a culture of sustainability in our society by doing their bit. They are not only incorporating sustainability principles in their curriculum but are also undertaking many sustainability initiatives for the betterment of the society. The present study is carried out to answer the research questions that 'Do management education institutions in India are actually undertaking any sustainability initiatives for the betterment our society or not?' If yes, than 'What are the various sustainability initiatives that are being practiced by premier management education institutions in India?

The paper is organized into five sections. Following this section, the next section is '*Literature review*' section, followed by third section '*Research methodology*'. This section is followed by fourth section '*Analysis and Discussion*'. The fifth section is '*Conclusion, Limitations and Future research directions*'.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In last few years many studies are carried out that deliberate on the importance of the concept of sustainable development and sustainability in current dynamic business environment. Some researchers discussed about the role of management education institutions in ensuring sustainability in society through acting as a driver of change. According to Giovannucci and Ponte (2005), the analysis of actual contribution and evaluation of sustainability initiative is not possible and unclear also both in terms of eco- friendly aspects as well as in terms of socio- economic aspects (Giovannucci & Ponte, 2005).

The concept of CSR and sustainability is now being discussed around the world and the field management education is also not left untouched by this trend. The various sustainability initiatives are not only seen in developed countries but it may now also be seen in developing country as well. Carroll and Shabana (2010) also mentioned in their study that today the concept of CSR has grown to leaps and bounds and is discussed across almost all seminars, conferences, journals, newspapers or at other mediums also (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Some of the studies also discussed about how various management education institutions are fostering a culture of sustainability in our society by updating their curriculum as per the industry requirements and are also practicing various sustainability initiatives.

The management education institutions may train future managers to make them competent enough to generate new ideas and suggest innovative solutions to problems for the benefit of businesses and society (Beusch, 2011). Many times the intentions and motivation of organisations behind running various CSR programs and sustainability initiatives is just to enhance their brand reputation (Rangan, A. Chase, & Karim, 2012). This argument is laid in the light of the general mindset that the primary responsibility of businesses is only to generate profits and reap financial benefits and all the other activities that does not lead to profit maximization are termed as useless for the organization

Barber and Venkatachalan (2013) in their study highlighted the fact that ethical and socially responsible behavior are considered a part of good business practices both by business organisations and society as well (Barber & Venkatachalam, 2013). Management education institutions has also started incorporating various sustainability initiatives in order to prepare future managers to deal with various aspects of challenges in all three dimensions of sustainability (i.e. economic, social and environmental). Jose (2016) in his study mentioned that due to the large scale of impact of sustainability issues, the concept of sustainability has attracted the attention of both business organisations and academic institutions (Jose, 2016).

In order to cope up with the challenges of present dynamic business environment, there is a strong need to change the way business organizations and higher education view the concept of sustainable development and management education. The triple bottom line approach or the 3 P i.e. people, planet and profit concept that is forwarded by Elkington should be incorporated by business organisations,

governments and educational institutions to deal with the sustainability issues (GORSKI, FUCIU, & DUMITRESCU, 2017).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Objectives

The objective of the study is to review the sustainability initiatives that are being practiced by top 10 premier management education institutions in India.

3.2 Design and Methodology

The present research is a combination of descriptive and exploratory research as on one hand it tries to explore something new and on another hand it tries to describe the findings drawn out of the research. The top ten management education institutions are selected on the basis of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) and Ministry of Human resource Development (MHRD) ranking of top 10 management institutions of India for the year 2017. The top ten management institutions as per the ranking were IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Banglore, IIM Calcutta, IIM Lucknow, IIM Kozhikode, IIT Delhi, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Roorkee, XLRI Jamshedpur and IIM Indore.

For the purpose of this study an exploratory review and web- based content analysis of the ten management institutions is conducted to find out various sustainability initiatives that are being undertaken by these institutions.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the institutions wise detailed list of all the major sustainability initiatives that are undertaken by the following top ten business schools of India:

4.1 IIM Ahmedabad

- **Student- Mediated Initiative for Learning to Excel (SMILE)**

IIM Ahmedabad in association with Ahmedabad municipal corporation and Wagh Bakri tea group has started this initiative to provide education to the poor children's living around the Vastrapur area where the institute is also located. The 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Class students are taught and the Centre is open for any student who wish to access its resources. The volunteer team of students of the institute regularly interact with the families of students of the Centre and manage all activities of the center as well (Ahmedabad, Student-Mediated Initiative for Learning to Excel (SMILE), 2017).

- **Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE)**

CIIE is set up by IIM Ahmedabad in association with Government of India and the Gujrat government. It is one of the leading centers in country and since 2007 has helped almost more than 500 startups in India. It also gets support from the alumni of the institute (Ahmedabad, 2017).

4.2 IIM Banglore

- **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs):**

The initiative started with the motive of providing good quality management education to large number of interested students which is not otherwise possible only through classroom based education alone. The three main objectives of this initiative are massive reach, positive social impact and outstanding quality management education. This initiative is also in line with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India' campaign by assisting in upgrading the skills of large number of countries young population (Banglore, 2018).

- **Satellite and Advanced Multimedia Interactive Education (SAMIE) or Tele Education Project**

The IIM Bangalore in association with the Centre for Public Policy (CPP) and Government of Karnataka has started this project to address the problem of poor quality education in the government and government aided schools in backward areas of Karnataka. This project has till date benefited more than 200000 children's from around 1000 schools from the backward areas of the state. In this initiative, live and interactive sessions are broadcasted on large screen in schools through satellite with the help of special equipment's. The students are also encouraged to ask questions at the end of each sessions in order to enhance their learning (Banglore, 2018).

- **Fostering Knowledge Implementation Links Project:** The Centre for Public Policy (CPP) in association with Karnataka government started this project to address the challenges of Public health issues (Banglore, 2018).
- **Gender and Health Equity (GHE) Project:** The CPP in association with Karnataka Government is running this project in Koppal district of Karnataka (Banglore, 2018).
- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan:**
 - **Partnering with the Deshpande Foundation:** IIM Bangalore adopted 5 Gram panchayats from the Navalgund Taluk of Dharwar district in Karnataka. Through this village adoption project, the IIM Bangalore is helping the residents of these villages in various fields such as agriculture (ex. Crop planning and crop production), education, RTC and RDS services, in information access and training through MOOCs etc.
 - **Pragathi Kendra:** IIM Bangalore in association with 11 consortium partners which includes big names such as Intel, Cisco, Wipro and new startups such as Terrasoft, Gumbhi software etc. runs this program. The initiatives undertaken includes crop data collection methodology, weather information, banking correspondence, agricultural extension through video conferencing, tele education, tele medicine etc. The Andhra Pradesh government has invited IIM Bangalore to start this project in 600 schools and the Karnataka government has approved the expansion of this project in 1000 more schools.
 - **ICT and Agriculture:** The IIM Bangalore has started this project in two districts of Karnataka and is working towards providing information to farmers through ICT. The team of researchers visit farmers with their tablets to update them with important information related to the yield and production of crops. This project is currently running in five gram panchayats and will help the farmers in improving yield and productivity of crops while reducing costs also (Banglore, 2018).

4.3 IIM Calcutta

- **Aging well:** This initiative is aimed at empowerment of elderly people in our country.
- **The Centre for Development and Environment Policy (CDEP):** It was established in 1998 to address critical issues such as sustainable development; environmental economics; Industry, trade and environment; Food, water and energy; Biodiversity; climate change etc.
- **Delay Tolerant peer-to-peer wireless network (DISARM):** This initiative was started with the aim to provide assistance in post – disaster situation analysis and resource management.
- **Social Inclusion through Digital Inclusion:** This initiative is aimed at educating children's from the underprivileged sections of the society with the help of social- media based knowledge management framework. (Calcutta, 2018)

4.4 IIM Lucknow

- **L- Incubator or Enterprise Incubation Centre:** It is a not for profit organization set up for promoting entrepreneurial talent in our country. The L- Incubator has recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ONGC Ltd. to assist and provide financial assistance to start-ups. It has also signed an agreement with The Energy Resource Institute (TERI) to work towards nurturing and supporting start-ups in energy sector (Mullick, 2018).

- **The Centre for Sustainable Business** at IIM Lucknow works with reputed NGOs and helps companies in identifying relevant projects and works with them. The IIM Lucknow is working with many such organisations including Bachon ki Duniya, Study half foundation, SPARC etc. (Lucknow, 2018).
- **The Centre for Business Sustainability (CBS)** is a multidisciplinary and collaborative body of experts which supports various initiatives to make the society environmentally conscious and prosperous. The aim of the Centre is to work towards sustainable development.

4.5 IIM Kozhikode

- **Rainwater Harvesting:**

IIM Kozhikode is blessed with the state-of-the art architecture of international repute. But due to the ambience and setting of the institute, it also faces the problem of lack of sustainable source of drinking water. Rainwater harvesting is a sustainable and eco- friendly solution in a monsoon-abundant state such as Kerala. Thus, rainwater harvesting comes as the most ideal, eco-friendly and sustainable solution to this problem. The waste water generated within the campus such as sewage water is also recycled. The rainwater conservation initiative combines both the benefits of water conservation and soil conservation initiatives. (Kozhikode, 2018)

4.6 IIT Delhi

- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan:** Many initiatives are being run under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan ranging from water management, renewable energy (ex. kitchen waste based biogas plant facility), water management etc.; helping village artisans and industries, other basic amenities (such as education in rural areas, health and sanitation, use of ICT in education etc.) (IIT, 2018).
- **National Service Scheme (NSS) IIT Delhi:** IIT Delhi chapter of NSS in association with Government of India is indulged in many nation building activities through various projects and events aimed at the benefit of people of Delhi and nearby areas. It has a volunteer base of around 2000 students of IIT Delhi who help in various social initiatives such as organizing blood donation camps, rural education, dealing with environmental issues etc. in partnership with various NGOs such as Vidya, STRAW, Bloodconnect, Lakshyam, Goonj etc.
It has following projects running such as:
 - **Teaching Projects:** Teaching students of primary level to JEE aspirants
 - **Health:** Organizing blood donation camps, vaccination drives etc.
 - **Movie Screening:** To increase awareness about social issues in students, screening of movies based on social issues is done
 - **Internship:** In partnership with NGOs, internship is done by students to understand grass root problems and finding their solution
 - **Societies:** Initiatives such as cloth collection drives, cleanliness drive, conducting workshops on social issues, right to information, self-defense etc.
 - **Environment:** Students are motivated to take projects related to environmental sustainability within the campus in order to promote optimum utilization of resources within the campus. Projects such as Nature lover's animal care and Green warriors work is running under it.
 - **Green Office:** In this initiative, only those members who have expertise in the area of dealing with environmental issues, green technology etc. are enrolled in order to make the campus more environment friendly. The aim of this initiative is to direct the institute towards sustainability by adopting green practices such as through water conservation, waste minimizing, water energy etc. (IIT, NSS IIT Delhi, 2018).

4.7 IIT Kharagpur

- **National Service Scheme (NSS):** In IIT Kharagpur, a dedicated team of more than 16 Faculties and 1000 undergraduate students and officers are conducting various programs as part of its sustainability initiative by contributing 500000 man-hour in every semester under various initiatives aimed at benefiting people from 25 backward villages. The major CSR projects are in the field of education, rural development project, hunger, poverty, malnutrition and health, gender equality and women empowerment, environmental sustainability; national heritage, art and culture etc. It has various mega projects such as signals and systems for life sciences, sustainable food security, future of cities etc.
- **Some ongoing activities under NSS are:**
 - Providing infrastructural support through road building at Balrampur, Malma and Bolla
 - Vocational Training Programs (Funded by society for self-employment of unemployed youth, Kolkata)
 - Twelve 144 hour courses on mobile- phone repairing, plumbing, electrical wiring, and electrical appliances repair etc.
 - Nutritional intervention at schools through pilot study at Malma where fruits and eggs are provided to 5-12 year old students instead of mid-day meals. The rate of malnutrition reduced from 80 % to 50 %.
- **Various centers in IIT, Kharagpur for socially relevant initiatives includes the following:**
 - **Rural Development centers:** Works towards initiatives aimed at rural India such as women and child welfare programs, intensive crop farming, forestry etc.
 - **Design and Innovation center for rural technology:** Its objective is to transfer and upgrade rural technology with the help of 40 NGO's covering eastern India.
 - **School of Medical science and Technology:** Works towards initiative aimed at providing better integrated health care delivery system
 - **Unnat Bharat Cell:** This initiative is part of Government of India's *Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan* and various other Centers and departments are also working under it which are listed as under:
 - National Service Scheme
 - Rural Technology Action Centre (RuTAG)
 - Rural Development Centre (RDC)
 - School of Medical Science and Technology (SMST)
 - Advanced technology development center (ATDC)
 - Department of Agriculture and Food engineering (AGFE) members (Kharagpur, 2018)

4.8 IIT Roorkee

- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan (UBA):** The IIT Roorkee has identified five villages namely Beladi- Salhapur, Chandpur- Horawala, Chharba, Meerpur- Mawazarpur and Mohand under its UBA initiative. The volunteer team of students of IIT Roorkee helps in promoting various Government schemes such as skill India, DELP scheme etc. The team of volunteers help farmers in organic farming and suggests other eco-friendly methods of farming and use of bio-gas also. The team tries to identify problems related to sanitation and cleanliness, education, skill development, physical infrastructure etc. and suggest sustainable solutions to each one of them (Roorkee, 2018).
- **Green Campus Initiative and National Service Scheme (NSS):** Many programs are being run under this green campus initiative such as campus green initiatives, energy conservation, energy auditing, solar energy generation, water conservation and waste water treatment etc. The student volunteers of NSS are also promoting these schemes in the nearby villages of IIT Roorkee as well.
- **Future action and Projects:** The institute is planning to establish its Green office, Green policy vision- statement and framework for the institute and develop mechanism for green assessment etc.

4.9 XLRI Jamshedpur

- **Joy of Giving Week:** It was launched in 2009 as the nationwide 'Festival of Philanthropy'. Since then it is being organized every year in Jamshedpur city and many initiatives are being undertaken as part of it such as raising funds for Leh- relief fund, Vastra – samman initiative for collecting and distributing usable clothes to poor people, organizing health camps in backward areas, helping the people living in draught hit- areas of Jharkhand by distributing dry-ration to them etc.
- **Blood- Donation Camps:** This campaign is being organized twice a year during January and July and nearly 250 units of blood is collected in these camps which goes to cancer patient's hospital for helping in their treatments.
- **XL Teaches:** Organizes career counselling sessions in various schools of Jamshedpur to guide them about future career options.
- **Social Initiative Group for Managerial assistance (SIGMA):** It is a student's committee which undertake socially responsive projects for the benefit of the society at large. It is an international platform after tie-up with international organisations which has a volunteer team of students who are committed to community service and works in partnership with NGOs and SMEs for development of sustainable business models. Its initiatives includes the following:
 - **National social entrepreneurship conference** is being organized every year in January in which students, corporates, academicians and successful entrepreneurs participate.
 - **Basic computer literacy program** is being undertaken by a team of 25-30 students by teaching them basics of computer by utilizing the computer labs of XLRI Jamshedpur
 - **Udaan- Children's Public Library** is an initiative for the children's of underprivileged sections of society to provide them access and exposure to the world of books. It also includes story-telling sessions by the volunteers to make it more effective (Jamshedpur, 2018).
- **Other initiatives includes** *Initiative for Social Entrepreneurial Leadership, FR Arrupe Center for Ecology and sustainability, beneficiary- benefactor etc.*

4.10 IIM Indore

- **Rural Immersion Program**
This program started in 2009 with the aim of creating awareness in future managers about various Governmental schemes in villages and meanwhile also empower them to analyze and suggest solutions to problems that are found in its execution. It is run in several districts of Madhya Pradesh in association with Madhya Pradesh Mantralaya, Bhopal.
- **Indore Marathon**
The Marathon is being organized on 2nd October every year for raising awareness regarding social issues.
- **School Adoption Program**
As part of this initiative, the institute has adopted four schools in M.P. and assists in solving all their problems irrespective of the fact that how big or small their problem may exist (For ex. classroom lighting, lack of drinking water etc.). The initiatives undertaken in this program includes distributing of stationary items, providing furniture assistance, training teachers, installation of Tata Swach water purifiers etc. (Indore, 2018).
- **Pragati**
It is IIM Indore's social sensitivity cell and aims at serving the underprivileged sections of society by various initiatives such as teaching students of nearby government schools, training them about computers, conducting 2 month adult literacy program for the worker staff of the Institute, running tree plantation drives, providing career counselling to school students, conducting blood donation drives, book donation drives etc.

- **Jagriti**

It is the social sensitivity wing of IIM Indore which carries out various initiatives such as running sessions for students of government schools in order to make them aware about the importance of education; distributing stationary such as school bags, notebooks etc.; setting up water filters in schools; conducting personality development classes for students; distributing sports equipment's etc.

- **iHelp**

It is a another social sensitivity initiative which is aimed at bringing change by educating children from underprivileged sections of society by motivating, guiding and encouraging them and also providing them with career counselling and support. The volunteer team of students weekly visit these students, each time with new modules and activities for students.

5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The present study contributes by studying the various sustainability initiatives that were carried out by top ten management education institutions in India. In the study it was found that almost all the business schools that were studied surprisingly are running sustainability initiatives in their institutions. The study also shows that almost all institutes are undertaking projects for educating poor students belonging to underprivileged sections of the society. All the institutions that were studied are working towards the Government of India initiative 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'.

The study presents a clear picture of sustainability initiatives of these institutions in the field of education, health etc. but it is also found that there is still large scope of improvement in terms of incorporating and implementing more sustainable practices within institutions in order to transform them into a sustainable university or institution.

Like all the studies, this study also has certain limitations. First limitation of the present study is that data regarding various sustainability initiatives of the selected institutions is only collected through their official websites. Second limitation of the study is that complete details regarding these initiatives were not available on the websites.

Future studies may consider rankings of top 50 or top 100 management education institutions such as NIRF- MHRD ranking or Business Today ranking of institutions in order to conduct a more comprehensive study of sustainability initiatives among business schools in India.

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