
Significance Of Extracurricular Activities In Overall Development And Enhancement In Employability Of A Student

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Abstract

The paper highlights the significance of Extracurricular Activities in the overall development of the student and enhancing their employability. Using database like Google scholar, JSTOR, Web of Science total 63 papers were reviewed which became a sufficient primary source. The chosen references were taken from articles, review of literature, dissertations, conference proceedings, etc.

Keywords: Extracurricular activities, student involvement, overall development, employability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Extracurricular Activities (ECAs) constitute an array of different yet interlinked activities intended for the overall growth of the student and development of the professional attributes imperative for their future. Extracurricular activities have been part of the education system in the western countries since 19th Century. These activities were considered as part of education system after the publication of Seven Cardinal Principles by Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education in 1918. The participation in extracurricular activities is popular due to the fact that it exposes children to an evolving environment and acquaints them to the social network other than school and home. Holloway (2000) & Presley (1996), state that participation in extracurricular activities contributes toward the overall development of the individual i.e personal, social, mental, and physical. These activities help in augmenting cognitive, problem solving, behavioral skillsetc.

ECAs are thus all encompassing activities that are structured and can be joined by students whether connected to the degree or not[1] these intend to evolve the social or interpersonal competencies[2]beneficial in the professional market. According to [3] sports, artistic pursuits, cultural, religious and social associations, volunteering events, etc., are the ECAs that are most relevant for the students. ECAs can thus be referred to as the “umbrella” term for all educational activities, outside the classroom, that are sponsored by the school or outside organisations. These activities neither carry any academic credit nor fall within the scope of regular curriculum. These activities are pertinent to student life though they are excluded from the regular classroom study. Another important feature of ECAs is it exists at all levels of education, from kindergarten to university education and has different impact on the students.

A survey carried out by education group Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International) around twenty thousand teachers and students participated from around the world, that included 4,400 teachers and 3,800 students from India proved in

comparison to students in other countries Indian students take up more extra classes and co-curricular activities. Approximately seventy two per cent of the students engage in co-curricular activities and seventy four percent of them play sports on regular basis. The Economic Times claims that debating is the most opted activity among Indian students, followed by science club, art and book club. The importance of involvement in extracurricular activities lies in the fact that it helps the students in acquiring generic skills, often termed as soft skills, enhance academic performance, increase the employability of the graduates, ensure friendship and understanding among peer, leave positive influence over adolescents, strengthen leadership and public speaking skills. Some studies also identify that involvement of student in ECAs benefits students in air health and well being.

Involvement in extracurricular activities helps building character, identify preferences and strengthen social networks [4]; [5] helps widen human capital by intermingling with others and enhancing various capabilities [6];. These enriching achievements are valuable for student's career [7] and understanding of one's aspirations, future prospects, in exploring jobs and in the workplace [8].

According to Harvard University, Carnegie Foundation and Stanford University study, effective people skills helps in grabbing 85% jobs whereas merely 15% of jobs are achieved by knowledge and technical skills. Considering this data it is therefore imperative to explore and participate in activities that help in attaining soft skills for better scot in employment. In his study opines that student's participation in clubs and societies during college helps them in enhancing leadership and public-speaking abilities.

[9] believes that ECAs help students honing skills like teamwork, leadership, organisation and many more that the companies/recruiters generally look for in the applicant they plan to hire. In words of for fresh graduates if academic performance contributes in achieving a job, the engagement in extracurricular activities contribute to crack the selection process and stay employable in future.

Involvement in ECAs is considered as the most valuable aspect both by students as prospective candidate as well as recruiters. Albeit different views of researchers about varied effects of extracurricular activities [10], almost all the studies agree that engagement in extracurricular activities are pertinent to career success as they teach and augment relevant skills. [11] adds that these experiences are applicable only if they complement concrete skills. Referring to the previous studies it is thus understood that extracurricular activities are indispensable not only in the progress of educational process, but also in providing harmonious conditions for the all around transformation of student and proves fundamental in professional training and securing jobs.

The present study aims to review various research papers to understand the term extracurricular activities and its significance in the overall development of student. This study addresses two main questions: 1) Does engagement in such Extracurricular activities influence the student development. 2) Whether involvement in such activities widens the scope for employability. For this study, sample of 63 research papers were reviewed. About 35 of them are referred to in this article.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To understand how participation in extracurricular activities influence the overall development of the student.
2. To analyze the role of ECAs in enhancing employability.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study reviews the already available literature from 1976 to 2018 in order to understand reasons for the initiation of the concept of ECAs, its importance for students and its role in the development of a student at various levels. Secondary data collected from various journals, books, websites etc is used for this study.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Role of Extracurricular activities in the overall development of the student

All the activities that take place beyond classroom are considered as extracurricular activities according to. This includes activities like involvement in student clubs, councils or societies; earn while learn programs; religious rendezvous and internet activities. [12] argues that all these optional and additional activities in which students engage other than their formal curriculum contribute to their "personal capital" therefore, it should not only be part of the program but should be considered as an essential. defines ECAs as a significant tool for learning and personality development, he also claims ECAs to be an integral "micro system of student life". ECAs are regarded as a keystone in the future employment of the student. Yet there are many gaps that remain unaddressed and prompt researchers to review the contemporary literature on importance of ECAs [6]

The study based on a college students reveals that those students who are engaged in creative writing, participate in theatre, music, debate or student groups, councils; religious or social activities or any other scientific or academic pursuits have greater chances of achieving a graduate degree and taking up higher education or professional career

[2] in their work probed the association between extracurricular activities like teamwork, oral communication, conflict management, decision making, etc., and interpersonal competencies.

Their findings suggest that the famous proverb "experience is a great teacher" seems suitable in the context of both extracurricular engagement and extra-role behavior at work place. On comparing the student's participation in fraternities/sororities with their counterparts' participation in sports team found that the former had better in interpersonal skills than the latter. They identified that leadership competencies were significantly more in the students who participated in student councils or groups or lead any type of activity. The study also suggested interpersonal skills strong communication, initiative taking, decision-making, and teamwork skills are result of active participation in extracurricular activities.

[13] in his study explains that extracurricular participation leads to favorable academic, social, psychological and behavioral adjustment According to their study it is observed that students of grade 10th, 12th who take up extracurricular activities in school manifest increased academic benefits. In addition, ECAs help in providing psychological benefits as it lowers depression, enhances social interactions, possesses increased sense of belongingness and gets a chance to engage in ethical activities.

Blornfield & Barber (2010); Im, Hughes & Shulruf (2010) in their studies depict a positive association between extracurricular participation and also indicate that cognitive and social development of children result in their academic success. The research also proves that there is a strong association among extracurricular involvement and academic success.

[9] in his study describes that extracurricular activities have multifaceted effects on all kinds of students, be it be average or the ones who are on the

verge of dropping out of school. Masson believes that ECAs firstly has a very positive impact on the behavior of the student, participating in sports activities they show discipline, responsibility, self-respect, develop self confidence and self esteem etc. Secondly, it helps students in increasing their grades and thirdly it helps in reducing the dropout rates in the colleges. Other than these impacts participating in ECAs also assist student in honing skills like teamwork, problem solving, time management, leadership, analytical thinking, organization and many more that the companies/recruiters generally look for in the applicant they plan to hire.

[14] conducted a study on college seniors of an Agriculture and Life Sciences College of Iowa State University, in which they analyzed the correlation between extracurricular integration and leadership success. The study is based on quantitative and qualitative data. Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2) is used to estimate Individual significance of leadership. The examination of leadership outcome is done on basis of four values like individual values, commitment, congruence, and consciousness of self. The results showed that increased leadership is no longer associated with increased participation. In fact, it is observed that the high level of involvement is linked with low level of leadership of an individual for each scale. The result is against the previous research which claimed that increased leadership is not dependent on the time spent in these extracurricular clubs and organizations in a week, rather both the SRLS-R2 group and SRLS-R2 omnibus scales show that students who spent excess time in extracurricular activities had higher scores.

[3] reveal in their research that the reasons for involvement in ECAs are either intrinsic or extrinsic. Where intrinsic motives are usually linked to innate desires, individual interests or something that one started pursuing in childhood, extrinsic motives are linked to the desires that grow with time or with need. In context of ECAs, extrinsic motives are based on conviction that it can help a student showcase their personal qualities which can be exhibited on resumes and therefore can be beneficial in future prospects. External motives also include the urge of a student to become distinct from his peer.

A study was carried out with 197 students which suggested that internal motives drive students to participate in ECAs. However, external motives are aroused while entering the profession. The pressure of fetching good jobs is the most vital component for an applicant's participation in ECAs. The need for ECAs at this time is because of the fact that organizations and recruiters want the students' credentials to match with their expectations. Participation in ECAs fulfills the requirements of both the recruiters and the student.

[15] conducted a study with mixed-methods which explored in detail the essence and role of engagement in extracurricular activity and the importance of schemes initiated by institutions to encourage participation in extracurricular activity. His study on UK students presents the view that students take up ECAs to present themselves in a way that is both different and valuable, to concentrate and organize their academics in a better way, to groom their soft skills, and to compensate for low academic performance. But the results of his study claim that engagement in extracurricular activity may show adverse effect on academics, and believe that engagement in ECAs alone does not assure job benefits. However, the organized institutional schemes encourage student engagement in extracurricular activity that further facilitate and enable them to gain new experiences that can benefit them in their careers.

The study of [16] examines how extracurricular activities help in evolution of students. The analysis conducted with a theoretical framework based on positive youth development approach and ecological systems theory. The study explores the reasons why children choose

certain extracurricular activities and further try to find out whether engagement in selected activities is linked to differentiation in student's transformation. The findings are set in the European context where the socio-emotional development and achievements of the involved children is studied. The results show that extracurricular activity participation has a significant impact on the development of children.

Monica Filippone Sechrist (2016) in her dissertation explores the association of involvement of college students in extracurricular activities with performing arts, their social skills along with motivation, feelings of belongingness, and grades. A quantitative approach was used to examine the effects of theatre involvement on students. On interviewing the students and the directors it was found that students' participation led to development of self confidence, acquiring skills of time management and possessing feeling of belongingness. Results exhibited that participating in theater extracurricular activities provides students an access to learn transferable skills and benefit from them.

[17] in his study demonstrates that participation in ECAs is beneficial in educational and social growth of young adults. The sample used for the research consisted of students in last year of school. Linear Regression is used to analyze various parameters. The result shows that participation in organized and structured out of school ECAs is importantly associated to positive educational outcomes in youngsters whereas negative outcome is seen by participating in less structured activities. The study also shows that the rate of participation in ECAs varies because of the gender, social status and migrant background of the students.

Chiu, C.Y. & Lau, E.Y.H. (2018) studies the connection between school readiness of the young children, their psychosocial outcomes and extracurricular participation. In a research conducted in Hong Kong with sample of sixty-four upper kindergarten class children, class teachers and their mothers, it was seen that there is positive association between children's extracurricular participation, their readiness for school and social abilities and negatively linked with a child's interest in ECAs. This study also depicts that there is an association between a child's school readiness, his cognitive competency, maternal involvement and the number of ECAs he opts. In general, children benefit more from their participation in ECAs rather than with maternal involvement.

2. Role of ECAs in enhancing employability

Rubin et al (2002) believes in the fact that the success in any organization requires not only high intellect but all rounded, emotionally intelligent, and interpersonally skilled aspirants. Therefore, he conducted a study which proved that ECAs not only help in enhancing interpersonal skills but also can be used as a tool by HR to assess the value of the candidate. Through the student's participation in ECAs, HR can gauge the capability of the candidates by types of roles and responsibilities the student takes up in various activities. They can align their search with the skills of the candidate.

[2] in their study equates candidates' extensive extracurricular participation with that of his counterparts who have very high academic qualifications without any other experience. According to their study student experience a great level of job satisfaction if they graduated from selective schools and have engaged in any extracurricular activity than the students who have not studied from selective schools though involved in activities. They also found an additional influence of sports activities on job satisfaction.

Merino (2007) in his research examined the association between work and educational directions of young people and the activities they take up in their leisure time. In his study he tried to probe whether graduates engage in

ECAs due to increasing employability concerns. After analyzing the data he found that imperfectly educated people face more challenges to shape a qualified work career, as they have few possibilities of any social organization whereas there are more opportunities for highly educated people. In such circumstances honing extra skills are beneficial. Nowadays the companies are keen in hiring employees posing high skills that help them keep pace with new trends in the competitive world. Therefore, in order to improve the job possibilities, students join social organization or NGOs, as working in them may be useful, though not guaranteed.

[18] in their study identified that employers mostly state that ECAs play a crucial role in gauging the quality of candidates and in differentiating among qualified candidates. They perceive that students who engage deeply in extracurricular activities possess specialised skills.

Elena Gavrilova & Kira Trostina (2017) in their desk research including theoretical literature and empirical studies tries to explore two questions first whether the students participating in extracurricular activities in foreign languages attain good jobs than their uninvolved peer and second whether there are some ECAs exclusively oriented to specific economic sector. The interviews conducted with HR specialists and faculty claimed that participation in ECAs in foreign languages enhanced the student's employability. The activities like individual and group presentations, language games etc., help in improving public speaking skills of the students that further help in overall development. Participation in ECAs conducted in foreign languages adds great value to the resume of the candidate which an employer appreciates in a professional environment. Thus, cross institutional student connection is encouraged by participation in ECAs that use foreign language as a continuous medium for knowledge transfer, and improve the credibility of the students.

[19] in their study revealed that the candidates with sound academic background and substantial involvement in extracurricular activities have strong resumes, are regarded more employable, they are organized, have better management and learning skills, in comparison to those who have moderate academic grades and zero participation in ECAs.

Charlene Joy E. Chua, Iris Anne G. Chuatoco, Airah Maria. Dela Peña, Danielle Louise F. Jimenez, Damirson A. Co (2017) in their study revealed that the employability of the students who never participated in the ECAs while studying in college is affected because they are unable to possess required soft skills. In addition to those quoted previously by other authors, the present study has recognized skills like resourcefulness, emotional intelligence, multitasking and work ethics essential as they help graduates increase their chances of employability.

[20] found in their study that there has been great focus on the attributes and competencies that students attain while studying in universities. According to them, 'narratives of employability' often believe that extracurricular achievements play an integral part in achieving employment post graduation. However, the futuristic thinkers of participation often overlook this role of ECAs that is much appreciated by contemporary students, particularly lower-income students.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude the ideas of different authors it is evident that extracurricular activities are extremely fundamental in shaping the personality of the student. The development is multifaceted and experienced at different levels. Each activity provided unique opportunities

for the students. Convergent views of students, faculty & employers state that academic performance along with participation in extracurricular can be significant in achieving distinctiveness. Fredricks & Eccles, Molinuevo, Bonillo, Pardo, Doval, & Tomibia, (2010) identifies that participation in ECA helps in psychological well-being of the student. It is interesting to find out that a bio-data that depicted participation in ECAs and exhibited various responsibilities is used as an essential tool in the selection process. The reasons for considering it essential are the fact that student participating in ECA possess superior skill sets which are crucial for future jobs. The present study concludes that further research on importance of ECAs and its linkage to employability is worthwhile as it shall help in planning and organizing ECAs to enhance employability of students.

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