

COVID-19 Outbreak: Impact on Campus Placement

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Abstract:

Most of the Indian B schools have their placement season from December to the April Month. But due to the Corona Virus Pandemic most of the colleges had to either stop the placements or a delay in the process of placements has occurred. This study is an attempt to understand the situation that the students and colleges will be facing post Covid-19 and what measures students need to take to be prepared post lockdown.

We shall first understand the effects of the pandemic on the process of placements and further the impact on students and employers. The first major concern is the way in which the students should be evaluated since they are not meeting face to face. Further, there is a hit on the businesses of all the employers which has affected the recruiting cycle of the organization.

All the companies are trying to hold on to the existing employees and not make any layoffs. But with this situation to get in new employees and train them is not only a risk to the lives but also an additional cost for which the balance sheets don't permit. In the process, we will understand how a way can be derived where the careers of the students who are selected is not put to stake and at the same time the cost for the employers and safety is been taken care. This study is also to understand what are the measures that students need to take so that they are all set and prepared post pandemic.

Key Words: Placements, Covid 19

Introduction:

The coronavirus pandemic that has swept the globe is perhaps going to be recorded in history as the most impactful and consequential event of this century. It has stretched the capacities of governance, public health infrastructure and social administration of affected nations to their limits. At the same time, the lockdown enforced to prevent the spread has brought economies to the ground and jeopardize the job prospects of many. With unemployment soaring during these tough times, recent graduates waiting in the wings and looking for their first job feel marooned.

The worst affected in the country are the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and all the Business management institutes. The Business Standard and the Economic Times reported that a lot of organizations have revoked its job offers to a lot of students. The Institutes are trying to come to a common consensus, which will be a win win situation to both. The institutes are appealing to the employers to be a little considerate toward the students. A number of firms have also cancelled summer internships of students and are offering virtual internships. Internship offers a prime avenue to students to gain work exposure and research experience. It's also part of the academic curriculum for all management institutes. Lack of field work experience will create difficulties for students as well as the employers. Considering above situation, we are trying to understand placement situation and student preparation post pandemic.

Literature Review:

As per industry experts the campus recruitment this year is affected badly due to pandemic and may have more impact during the next year. There is a possibility that the prevailing conditions may lead to a spurt in the start ups. Atmanirbhar initiative by govt may be one of the reasons. The government wants to drive economic growth by new innovations. But at the same time the investors will make investment criteria more stringent.

During this time of the year most of the colleges are almost done with their placement season and the students join the corporate world. But this year due the lockdown it seems that the dreams of many young professionals are shattered who were expecting to be recruited through campus placements.

Dr. Neena Panandikar, principal of Don Bosco college of Engineering, said that “the prolonged lockdown has affected in certain ways the overall job placement scenario this time. Due to lockdown, it is not possible to visit the college but some organizations have started taking online interviews. The count of companies visiting the college has reduced to a great extent in comparison to last year.” She also mentioned that there is a rise in the know of start ups in the country. According to her the students need to be very proactive and be very well prepared to be a part of the competitive world post lockdown, as for every one job there will be minimum of 100 applications which shall include fresher's as well as the experienced candidates. (Covid – 19

Impact: Low job placements may lead to a spurt in start Ups – Article published in Sakal times dated: Wednesday 6th May 2020)

Assagao Shrinivas Joshi, Manager at the corporate institute relationship cell of angel institute of technology & design, said that “Most of the companies visit campus and finish pool campus drives by 2nd week of March. Few companies are also lined up in April. Placement scenario looks good depending on the no of offers made before lockdown but now it will depend on the joining dates and honoring the offers provided “

In the usual situation the placements of most B schools gets 80% completed by this time of the year, and the rest 20 % interviews are lined up. For this, most of the companies like PWC are resorting to Skype and Zoom for placement interviews, while some has delayed the process until the lockdown opens. This is the current situation – what about the future? What about the placements post Covid-19?

We can find this by comparing the impact on placements during the past major global crisis like global recession in 2008.

INDIAN GDP GROWTH AND ITS EFFECTS ON PLACEMENTS POST COVID 19



Source: IMF data mapper: world economic outlook (April 2020)

The graph above shows the current state of the Indian GDP. When we consider it with other major world indicators, India is still not in its worst stage. However, when we compare the Indian GDP in the year 2008 and 2020, a few things are clear:

1. The GDP growth rate in 2008 was 3.9. In 2020, it had reached to an unprecedented low by going to 1.9 %
2. The GDP drop in 2008 was steep. However, in case of 2020 the GDP decline was gradual.
3. Moody's prediction for India pre – pandemic mapped GDP to grow between 2 – 2.5 % growth. But, COVID-19 pushed it down to 1.9%
4. Even though the GDP growth rate was 3.9 % in 2008, it is skyrocketed to 8.5 % within one year (in 2009). As per Moody's prediction, India's growth rate should rebound to 5.8 % in 2021. A 2.7 % gap is estimated if one compares with 2008's situation.

We can make out from that that the economic conditions of India in 2021 will have direct impact on placements of B school like it did in 2009.

Objectives of the study:

1. To find out impact of lockdown on placements.
2. To understand the situation post lockdown
3. To identify the measures, the students should take to be prepared

Research Methodology:

Research methodology is a method to solve the research problem systematically. It involves gathering data, use of statistical techniques, interpretations and drawing conclusions about research data. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, data is collected from different sources.

The purpose of this section is to describe the methodology carried out to complete the work. The methodology plays dominant role in any research work. The effectiveness of any research work depends upon the correctness and effectiveness of the research methodology.

For this study, Secondary data is collected from various Journals, books, websites, Government reports, News papers, and other research reports.

Findings:

Impact of Lockdown on Placements:

Colleges and universities are in a fix about the placement scenario as there is limited clarity on when will the lockdown be lifted. In most of the colleges the placement season takes place in 2 phases, where the 1st phase is over in December and the 2nd phase in February which was suspended due to the lockdown crisis. Most of the placements officers are hoping that the placement season will open up again and they will reach out to the companies that are registered depending on the scenario. There are a few companies who are also withdrawing the offers or delaying joining due the lockdown. This is because the firms are too caught in stagnation, with their decision on hiring and expanding due the pandemic and its effects. The startups, small and medium sized companies could be affected badly by the crunch caused by the lockdown. Many firms are now giving pay cuts, freezing salary hikes, no promotions and hiring is expected to get slower. Organizations do not have any clarity on whether they can do any fresh hiring or no. As per a few HR's, they expect that they will be less no of hiring in the year to come.

The longer term outlook regarding the employment prospects of current post graduates including in terms of salary can only be determined in the coming few months. The students who can come out of this reasonably are the ones who are willing to look outside the traditional avenues. They should be open to taking contractual employment or commissions and gig work based on their capabilities. Students with additional skill sets will prove valuable at this juncture.

Placements Post Covid 19:

1. India's economic growth was already on a slowdown; COVID-19 pushed it down to an all time low of 1.9 %. With the low economic growth and lay-offs in the current situation, B- schools will have to face huge competitions. Thus we can expect that the placement process will be very slow in the coming year.

2. Those students who have joined B- schools in 2019 may not be able to get the desired internship and very few or none of the companies may offer PPO's. This will have a direct impact on the final placements of 2021.
3. However, most of the students get placed from December – February season. So there is almost 8 months time for the economy to bounce back. But still this will lead to a massive competition among the students passing from tier 2 and tier 3 B schools against the professionals with 1 or 2 years of experience. The fresher students will have to accept the works at lower salary and may also have to compromise on the work profiles.
4. There are a few sectors which are affected to a great extent like retails, supply chain and tourism. Thus these sectors might not take part in the placement season at all.
5. Gig workers are typically the ones who are in contractual, freelancing and temporary jobs. Post pandemic, we will also see the emergence of new types of work and that will be virtual working. Most of the companies have shifted to work from home and that will be the new trend in 2020.
6. The Covid – 19 situations may also give rise to a lot of innovations, due to which a lot of new startups might also come forward. New jobs in the area of technology, video editing, content writing, and graphic designing will boost.

Measures to be taken by students:

1. **Face Reality:** The students to mentally prepare themselves that they may or may not get placed in 2021's placement season. The best they can do right now is work on improving their profile, take part in research, learn something new to keep themselves industry ready when the time comes.
2. **Up skill:** Whether there is economic crisis or no, highly skilled individuals are always picked up. Acquiring a specialized skill, apart from knowledge and specialized domain will give an upper hand in the job market in 2021. There are various online courses on subjects like, digital marketing, people analytics, financial domain etc. Students can avail these courses as per their level of interest to be in a better position during the placement season of 2021.
3. **Taking up remote projects:** Due to the safety measure, most of the companies have opted for remote or virtual working. Most of the work will happen digitally. Students can

make most of it by reaching out to the startups and collaborating on live projects with them.

4. **Network Digitally:** Covid-19 has brought in a halt in the networking we do face to face during various events, like seminars and b school competitions. Students should invest their time in building contacts with the industry on LinkedIn and interacting with them on various webinars. This will not only help in building the knowledge but also develop contact which may help in landing a job in future.
5. Students need to be proactive in reaching out to companies, write to as many firms as possible with the CV's.
6. They need to look beyond traditional avenues, explore the startup ecosystem for jobs.
7. Try and learn a foreign language, which will help in getting virtual projects overseas.

Conclusion:

It looks like it will take some time for the things to get back to normal, including the economy. The repercussions on COVID-19 will have a significant impact on the market & consumer behavior, also resulting into a change in the organizational behavior. In the next coming years, the companies will be under a cost cutting mode, which will lead to a less availability of jobs in the market. Some job will be redundant and some new types of jobs with a focus on the virtual working will be a part of the corporate world. While coming couple of years may not be great for jobseekers, but it is definitely a great time for studying and upgrading the skills. Thus lets conclude that this is a time to grow, nurture the knowledge and learn while staying safe.

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