

**CASE STUDY ON THE SELECTED INDIAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS ABOUT THEIR ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR AS HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

'Education' is viewed as one of the fundamental requisites for achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Consequently, an important pre-condition for achieving such goals is the fulfilment of the desired performances by the educational institutions performing at various levels of the system. With a view to ensure the satisfaction of the said requirement, the UN Global Compact (UNGC) has been established and UN Principles of Responsible Management Educations (PRME) have been developed which are expected to be followed voluntarily by the higher educational institutions (HEI) throughout the globe. Several HEIs from India, are participating as members in the joint effort of UNGC and PRME and are reporting periodically in respect of their respective contributions or achievements as per the suggested formats. Under this given context, present study seeks to explore a simple research question of measuring the contributions of selected Indian academic institutions in achieving the declared goals relevant for this sector. With this end in view and using the case study format, an evaluation of each of the selected HEIs is made on the basis of the respective performance reports submitted by the HEIs to the PRME.

The analysis shows that the sample HEIs are more involved in awareness program than the desired actual performance. Moreover, the practices in respect of the internal issues are less disclosed in their reports. And all of the selected HEIs are not providing information as per the suggested structure of the sustainability related performance disclosure.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, CSR, Academic Social Responsibility

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, ethics has transformed from egocentric to ecocentric. And in the scenario of globalisation, ethics has transformed at geocentric level. Where, initiatives are required by all types of socio-economic organisations to support the objectives of sustainability for all the related parties. The United Nation is continuously working on the issues of sustainability at global level. The Sustainable Development Goals have been set up with such seventeen issues related with the objectives of sustainability. Quality education is being considered as one of the priority goal among those seventeen issues. UN deals with educational issues through the UNESCO, UNICEF, and UN Special Envoy for Global Education, Global Education First Initiatives and UNGEI etc. These organisational initiatives are basically deal with the basic level of education, gender equality, formation of common platform of education, women education etc. Over the decades, it is found that the higher education institution can play a big role in the joint initiatives of sustainability.

Their ethical and responsible practices can be helpful to make good employees and leaders for the organisation and companies. To involve these higher institutions with the sustainability practices, the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is formed in the year 2007 by the UN with joint collaboration of UN Global Compact.

The UN Global Compact considers the businesses voluntary involvement and activities to deal with the sustainability objectives. The UNGC has suggested four aspects with ten principles, which are expected to be followed by the member organisation of the UNGC and the PRME has suggested six principles to be followed and disclosed through the Sharing Information on Progress report (SIP). This SIP basically includes the practices suggested in the UNGC principles from the higher education institution's perspective.

Different organisations from all over the world are joining these initiatives. Till date, forty four (44) academic institutions have joint UNGC and twenty six (33) business schools out of almost 4000 Indian business schools, have joint with the PRME from India. Some of these PRME members are regularly submitting SIP reports. The PRME principles include purpose to develop student as providers of sustainable value, value for sustainability in the curriculum, methods to build responsible leadership through educational framework, better understanding of responsibilities through the research, make joint effort through the partnership with the other stakeholders of sustainability and conducting awareness program on sustainability.

The ten principle of UNGC are basically dealt with the issues in relation to the human rights, employees, equality, environmental conservation and anti-corruption. Through a guideline issued on 2012, UNGC have suggested the scope and benefits of higher education institutions (HEI) to perform in socially responsible way. It has also suggested multiple academic related issues relating to those principles, in which HEIs may emphasis in support sustainability. The PRME have indicated some benefits for the institution through the involvement in sustainability activities. These are like, creating awareness about the institutional commitment, giving conscious pictures of the activities, boosting reputation, connecting relevant people within the organisation, defining strategy, synergies and progress identification.

So, it can be seen that the UNGC and PRME have suggested the scope of HEIs' involvement in sustainability through their principles. The member academic institutions are expected to follow those principles in their activities. Hence, the extent of the member institutions' responsible initiatives can be checked on the basis of those principles. The present paper is to explore the extent of such institutional initiatives.

In relation to this, the paper is divided into different sections. After the basic introduction in section one, a brief literatures review is made and an objective of the study is narrated in section two. Research design is mentioned in section three. Section four is presenting the analysis of case study. The conclusion of the study is narrated in section five. The last part is for the references.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW & OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

Considering the objective of the study, not so many literatures can be found on that specific issue. But, several literatures and reports can be found on the study of requirements of ethics, responsible practices etc. in the academic institutions. Some of them have also indicated the necessary criteria to make an institution ethically efficient, some have also focused on the involvement of academic institution to make corporate social performances more successful. Among these literatures, some of them have narrated here under.

In an article issued by the Council for Industry and higher Education, suggested the several elements for the proper establishment and smooth functioning of institution in ethical way. These are governance, upholding of values, staff & students' guidance, proper legislation, involvement of stakeholders, attracting staff & students, encouraging funding and sponsorship.

Waithaka & Gitimu (2012) have studied on the academic dishonesty of the students in HEIs and suggested an integrated approach for all the stakeholders of society. They have found that the governance of the institution is deteriorating and improvements in technology are also causing such dishonesty. In a study made by Robbins & Evans (2009), the institutional integrity has been indicated by the responsible and sustainable activities of the public institutions. They have found that the values for faculty, staff and students, can be created by the sustaining environment, relationship, excellence in governance and funding.

A study on the strategic initiative of ethics in education ( Linberg & Modin, 2014) has suggested that the ethics should not only be limited in curriculum, but it must be practiced by every individual related with the institution. Those learning help a student into a good leader. They have also indicated that such ethical initiation may face challenge regarding the determination of its effectiveness in teaching.

Heilmayr (2006) has studied on the sustainability related discloser practices among the HEIs. Here, it has been reported that the institution are spending on greening, cleaning, performance assessment of staff, culture to be committed on sustainability etc. The study indicates that the most common problem is about the realisation of the institution to be responsible for sustainability. It has also suggested that the problem can be solved by the imposition of standard framework and by the involvement of administration.

The University of Alberta have published a report on 2010, in which it has indicated the benefits to be gained by the sustainability activities. They have also indicated different strategy to support sustainability. These are commitment, connection, co-ordination, promotion, awareness, education, credibility and organisational culture.

So, these studies are showing several dimensions of the academic involvement for sustainability objectives. Some studies are indicating the benefits generated through the responsible performance. Some have indicated limitation in the performance disclosures. Again, several scholars have suggested the integrated approach of the different segment in educational institution to practice sustainability. Scholars have also suggested a common or standard framework of disclosure of sustainable performance for the HEIs.

Now, after the specification of indicator of disclosures by the UNGC and call for joint effort by the PRME, most of the above-mentioned scholarly issues may have resolved. Several HEIs from the different countries are joining them over the years. But, question arises on the effective participation of those institutions, regarding their overall inclusion of the UNGC principles among the different activities of the institutions and a proper disclosure of such practices.

Therefore, the objective of the present paper is to know about the extent of the HEIs sustainable performances, measured on the basis of the disclosers of SIP reports.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In relation to the above-mentioned objective, the published SIP reports are reviewed of the Indian business schools like BIMTECH, ISB and XLRI. The performance disclosures are also compared with the suggested requirement of UNGC, to check the extent of the HEIs performance through their performance disclosure.

### **CASE FINDINGS**

Based on the published reports, the following cases are narrated hereunder-

#### **BIMTECH (BIRLA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY):**

This institution was founded on 1988 in the National Capital Range region in India. It has several technical and management development courses at post graduate and higher level. A review of the SIP report on 2015, it can be seen that the main internal issues has been focused on the student fraternity. To this objective, it has build up compulsory curriculum as 'Responsible Business'. Several of the UNGC principles and framework, governance structure have been introduced in it. Organisational culture have been formed and directed to the students to build up better relationship. It provides free and low cost tuition to the underprivileged children. Donation on vastra-daan and donation of library books to the village schools and jails. It has formed Ranganathan Society for Social Welfare and Library Development which work in the different place of Uttar Pradesh. To aware about the environment and social issues, it has formed United Friends of Earth Forum. Social entrepreneurship activities are performed on the poor sanitation, water logging, waste disposal and drinking water etc. Awareness program like debate, competition, group discussion, video film etc., are conducted on the biodiversity issues. Other events like Greenathon on the 'save water', Earth Hour for energy saving program and WOW campaign for waste reduction are also made.

In relation to the diversity issue, the institute admit all types of students from all corner of the country. And efforts are made to see that regional differences with regard to language, customs, food and festivals are addressed through various means. The institute has cultural conduit body to bring all students close to each other, through the different events like 'Samanway'. It has zero-tolerance policy against ragging and any type of harassment. The institute celebrate most of the big festival of all religions.

Special lectures are also arranged on the spirituality and happiness. It discusses humanity, life journey and religious matter. It has international students and faculty exchange program. It has almost 25 countries, in which it exchanges students with the respective institutions. This institute demonstrate practically the inclusion of ethics, sustainability and inclusiveness in its practices. Collaboration and cooperation are made with the partnering organisations at national and international level. Management development program are conducted in relation to the sustainability with SAIL, NTPC, ONGC, IFFCO etc. The BIMTECH courses also certified by the IICA on CSR aspect. National and International conferences are made on regular basis on the sustainability related issues in collaboration with Economic Times, Global Reporting Initiatives, IICA, UN PRME, CAR Asia (Hong Kong), UN Online Volunteer Program, Institute of Public Enterprise etc. Several excellence awards have been owned by the BIMTECH on the active involvement in sustainability objectives.

**ISB (INDIAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS):**

ISB was founded in the year 2001 with campuses at Hyderabad and Mohali. It is a management institution, having several courses on management and other related areas from post graduate to higher level. Several information are reported in the published SIP of 2015. The ISB has more than 750 students with 6900 alumni. It has direct market exposure learning program including national (28 B Schools) and international (16 B Schools) level of student exchange facility. It conducts programs on the Social Venture Challenges, Future Today, Global Social Venture Competition, ISB Super League competition, IKSHAA marketing summit etc.

The students have owned several prizes at national and international level and donation are made in the urban healthcare project. Joint classes conducted with consultancy firm (28%), 7% with high technology companies, 9% with IT majors, 15% with the E-Commerce companies and 31% with the others. The report has discussed several courses offered by ISB. The faculty member are encouraged for innovative techniques and regular publication of their work in the journals. In 2014-15 the faculties have published their articles in more than 18 international journals. It has hosted 81 faculty research seminar and 10 industry workshops. Among these 10 workshops almost 3 to 4 are related with the corporate social responsibility issues. 41 conference trips are funded by the institution in this year. The institute make case studies in several disciplines, which are being sold (60000 cases) in all over the world. Practices are also made on the concept of Smart City and course on health care. It has partnership with NSE, EY Bajaj Foundation for research, Biocon Foundation, SREI Infrastructure Finance etc. The sustainability practices are resulting in 6% reduction of energy consumption annually and of 31% cumulative reduction over last three years, annual reduction of 2600 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> and meeting 30% of its water requirement by rain harvesting project. These activities are recognised by the several American organisations and 7 awards are received in India.

**XLRI (Xavier School of Management):**

XLRI Jamshedpur is for higher management education in India. It was established in 1949. Its vision considers academic excellence, human values and social awareness, improving quality of life within organisation, integrity and inclusive global economy. The total initiative of XLRI is divided into institutional, academic and research orientation. Under institutional initiatives there are JRD Tata Foundation, centre for Rural Development, Centre for Global Management, Green campus initiatives etc. the academic activities include course curriculum as compulsory and elective basis. The project work, conferences and capacity building programs come under the research initiatives. The JRD Tata Foundation has organised two conference on sustainability with more than 250 participants and other seminar on inequality, Gandhian ethics etc. It has also completed joint collaboration project on ethics with Hitachi. The Rural Management centre has conducted 5 training programs on leadership development and 122 health professionals are trained. It activities on social concerns spread in Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The Ecology and Sustainability centre organise induction program for the students and it has partnership with 10 NGOs. It makes joint forum like SIGMA committee, nearly 170 development sector professionals are connected with this. Faculty development attended by 20 professionals from 10 management schools. Indo-US-Africa tri lateral cooperation training program conducted. It measures carbon footprint through students' involvement. 33 bicycles introduced for communication within the building blocks. Model Village project has benefited nearly 1500 or more persons.

Under academic initiatives, managerial ethics has been considered as core course. Other courses initiated like Introduction of Social Entrepreneurship, Social Banking, Social Finance and managing public-private partnership. Regular publications are made in the reputed journal by the respective faculties (approximately 35 publications & presentation work). It has detail web availability of the library books, eBooks, journal etc. It has nearly 12000 alumni, with whom XLRI continuously interact and share knowledge.

So, it can be seen that the content of ISB and XLRI reports are more than the BIMTECH. But, ISB has mainly focused on the students' benefits in relation to their job orientated activities, whereas BIMTECH implements ethical conducts among all activities of the organisation. The XLRI doing social activities through the separate body like of Trust and NGOs etc. Other than the BIMTECH, ISB and XLRI reports have more objective information with respect to their disclosures. But, the content of BIMTECH is showing that it is trying to integrate every single element of the institution to work for the common objectives of sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION**

Therefore, it can be concluded that the BIMTECH has initiated ethical conducts and sustainability closer to its students and other stakeholders. The ISB is trying to promote its own brand through the reports with less emphasis on the requirement of sustainability related performance disclosure. The XLRI stands in the middle position of BIMTECH and ISB, regarding their initiatives and disclosure of ethical conduct and sustainability activities. In addition to this, none of the sample institution are following the minimum requisite format of performance disclosure as suggested by UNGC, but the BIMTECH and XLRI have partially followed the principles of PRME in their Sharing Information on Progress reports.

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