

## DRASTIC CHANGES IN THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS FROM INSTITUTES

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### ABSTRACT

Over the Decades, the world has witnessed changes at a quantum pace. The new revolutions in Technology have brought mammoth changes in almost every Industry. Banking, Manufacturing, Service Sector or be it Information Technology, all of them have seen both grey and the white

side of this Technological Revolution. The Academic Industry has not been able to keep itself aloof of these advancements. While in the yester years the main emphasis was given to imparting education to the students, the thrust has changed drastically. The students are not less than customers who seek value for money and the Institutions are not less than service providers who wish to provide a 360' customer experience to gain prospective and Traditional customers (students). The urge of adopting latest Marketing Strategies by the Educational Institutions to attract students is trending these days. Be it Social Media, Visual Marketing or Word to Word Marketing, the Institutions are not leaving any stone unturned to adopt any Marketing Channel which can draw them more students. However, it is of great importance for the Institutions to make sure that they fulfill the promises made at the time of Marketing Strategies to retain and attract more prospective students. With the education sector having a market share of over Trillion Dollars, the need to know the changing expectations of the students'' becomes more imperative and the findings are astonishing. Though there has not been much work done in India to gain insight of students' expectations, this research holds prime importance in the West, where the students are kept at the highest degree of the end.

**KEYWORDS:** Academics, Changes, Education, Institutions, Students' Expectations, Value for Money, Marketing Strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

The Academics sector which is running in Trillions US Dollars, has now become another profit making business unlike yester years. All the theories which hold good in any Manufacturing or service sector hold well in this sector as well. The main stakeholders are the students and the concept like value for money, great customer experience, service deliverables are highly integrated in the context of imparting Academics. The highly popular RATER model (Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness), formerly known as SERVQUAL model, propounded by Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman and Leonard L. Berry in 1988 which marks the benchmarks of the service deliverables hold good in this Industry too<sup>[1]</sup>. At the same time, factors like increase in the Tuition fee, Technological Advancements, Changes in the work flow management of the Industry, Demographic changes in the students' class<sup>[2]</sup> are some of the major reasons for the change in the students' expectations from their respective Institutions.

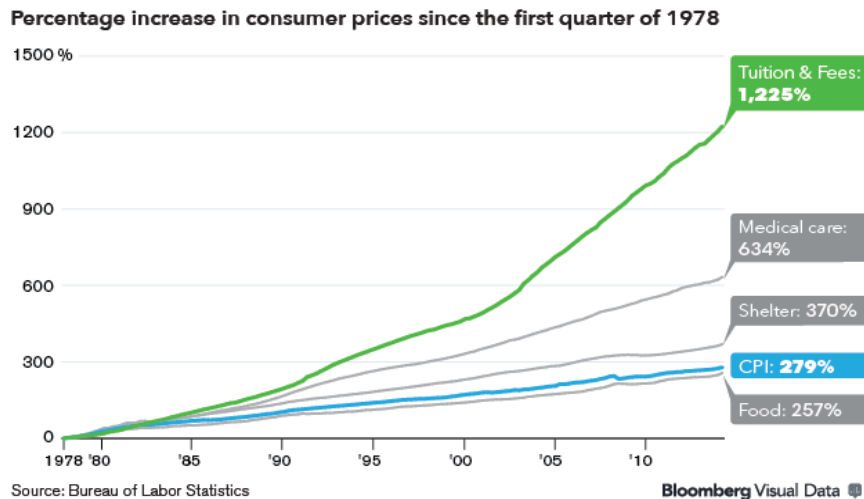
The author tends to discuss the main changes in the students' expectations in the main text of the Research Paper.

## The Key Findings

The main target audience and the stake holders of the Institutions remain the students. The advancements made over the years have resulted in a paradigm shift in the outlook of the student towards their educational institutions. The main reasons for the shift in this outlook are as follows:

### Explicit Increase in the Institutions' Tuition Fee

An alarming increase in the fee demanded by the Institutions has been witnessed over the years. The sky rocketing fee in the colleges has raised a scary alarm. Between the years 2003-2013 there has been a shocking 79.5% increase in the tuition fee of the Institutions. With the IITs' and IIMs' increasing their fee structure, it becomes very imperative that the students will ask for more 'Value for money' and will make sure that they get a very handsome package in order to come off the burden of Education loans taken.<sup>[3]</sup>



**Fig 1: Increase in Tuition Fee vs other daily expenditure.**

### Higher Contact Hours

With the increase in the Tuition fee, demanding ‘Value for Money’ and expecting the best and the highest package, the students expect more contact hours from the faculty members.<sup>[3]</sup> They wish to get a personalized attention in terms of learning and teaching atmosphere and want his/her query to be taken care of personally by the teacher. Today’s students are mature and are not traditional students. They are well versed with their academic aspirations; hence they demand higher degree of attention and catering to.

### Technological Changes

It is said that the Technology replaces Technology in about a week’s time itself. With the coming up of latest ways of learning, so many MOOCs programs (Massive Online open courses), ICT based learning, the students are in a bad era of learning explosion. They have so much in their mind, that they wish to address in all at one time. They expect the Professors to give them instant answers. Any delay in the receipt of the same, makes them eager and they switch to search engines to quench their curiosity.

### Changes in Market Competitiveness

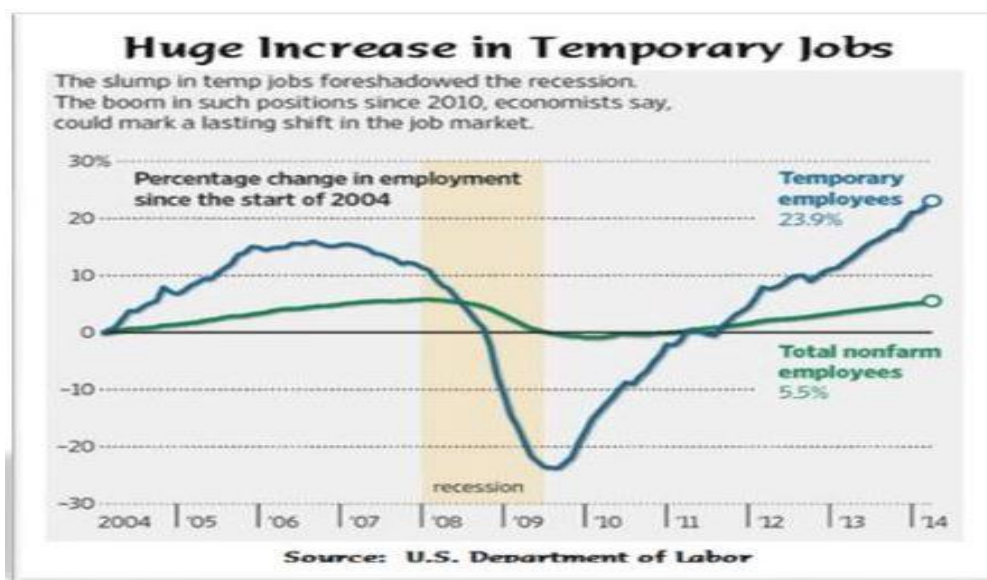
As discussed above, the Technological changes have proved to be a holy grail in the teaching learning environment. With the students having so many ways to learn and seek their answers apart from the Institutions and teachers, the market competitiveness has gone global. Through various online learning portals and social networking sites, the students can converse and talk globally to each other. This has raised the expectations of the students as their outlook has matured and grown. This has resulted in raising the bar drastically.

### Changes in the Industry Outlook

The industry is demanding ready to work people now. In India, traditionally the probation period (This is defined as the time given by the employer to employee to get training and be industry ready) for the fresher hiring was 6 months, which is now shrinking to 3 months. Eventually, the day is not far wherein this will be 0 months. Students understand this concept and demand more from the Institutions, in order to fit in the Industry's shoes.

### Just in Time (Jit) Hiring

There is a new concept developed in the Industry called 'JIT'. The companies like Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and many other bulk recruiters of freshers, have moved to this concept. This defines that instead of hiring students beforehand in mass and deploying them as and when the project is acquired, the companies are hiring them after the acquisition of the project. So technically a typical student will need to be ever ready to sit in the college placement. So, there is an eagerness in the students to gain as much as possible in a very short span of time. Hence, this again raised the bar of the Institutions' deliverables to them.



**Fig 2: Graph showing increase in Just in time and Temporary Hiring.**

### Students' Expectations Are Driven by the 'Amazon Model'<sup>[4]</sup>

Now a days, major E Commerce sites are a great case study to learn the analysis of a customers' interest area and most personalized customer service experience. It is said by Andrew Roth, President, Emeritus, Notre Dame College, that the model developed by the major E Commerce giant 'Amazon' is amazing. The way they use predictive analysis to guess the next move of the customers and covert the data collected in Information and

thereafter in actionable intelligence is remarkable. Andrew states that the Institutions must use the warehouse of data they have to predict the students' next demand, their expectations and their own delivery.

### **Need For Soft Skills and Skills Development**

There is a new model amongst the Industry which they term as 'Fitting in their culture' - With the Governments' call for 'Creation of new job' and encouraging 'Entrepreneurship Development' the students expects and demands more than just the college curriculum. Their inclination towards innovation asserts that they must be trained in various job live skills in order to gain an edge over the ever increasing competitiveness. Hence, the expectations remain to be taught much above the academic curriculum which contributes as just 30% of their academic excellence.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is clearly evident that the problem exists far beyond the ever increasing expectations of the students. With over colleges and institutions been close down all over the world, better technology gripping the students and ever increasing competition, it is a matter of great food for thought that we cater to the student's need much better. Some of the suggested changes which the author recommends are as follows:

- 1) The students must be counselled and educated properly about the cutting grants from the government. They must be told that the impact of increasing fee gets null and void by the decreasing grant from the Government. They must also be educated on the fact that the changing teaching methods with the help of latest technology puts and additional pressure on the Institutions' management to keep changing the technical infrastructure which costs mullahs.
- 2) Teachers and the Institutions' management need to ascertain that the emphasis on personalized classes is maintained. They must make sure to motivate the faculty by all means so that they take full interest in academics and make sure to provide full ownership of the customers' (referred here as student) satisfaction.
- 3) The Institutions must make sure that the Traditional ways of teaching must be catalyzed with newer ways. With the academic syllabus just been 30% of the course degree, a lot of additional inputs are expected by the students. They want to be much above their usual knowledge and gets impatient if they do not get so. Lot of ICT based learning must be there, newer ways of learning and Teaching must be introduced by the Institutions.

- 4) The Academic Heads, Government Officials and the Senior Teachers must join hands together to inculcate the Industry based curriculum or audit courses. With the companies demanding Industry ready people, more emphasis must be given on practical work than theoretical work. Genuine internships, Apprenticeships and Industry exposure to the students must be ensured. Here it is imperative that the positive efforts from the Industry's personnel must be seen.
- 5) The need for Soft Skills must not be ignored by the Institutions. It is widely prevalent that the companies look for the students for their fitness in the culture. They look for the students who are ready to be flexible and can be used in any department. The call for the day is dynamism and multi talent. A full package is needed by the company. Technical skills, interpersonal skills are the demand of the industry and the students understand the need for the same. Hence, they must be taught about these things as well.

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