



## A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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### Abstract:

Community engagement implies relationships between the universities and communities, which is mutually beneficial for both parties and adopts a bidirectional flow of information between the two. It deviates from the normal outreach/extension functions, to an approach which is more participative and committed to the creation and sharing of knowledge. The aim of the study explores the present status, problems and solutions for implementing Community Engagement programs as Social Responsibility of Higher education Institutions. The Researcher analyse the objectives through the Descriptive Survey method.

**Keywords:** Denomination, Apprehension, Social Liability.

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### Introduction:

Education is the third eye of a person. It gives him/her acumen into all phenomenons and makes accomplishment of the true meaning of life. It dismisses darkness and demolishes delusion. Society has made an eminent effort to modernize the world by learning, communication health and so many other ways in a democracy, the education of the child is most important. So, his education should be such as to spread his inherent interests and inherent strength and they should not be suppressed in any situation.

Higher education, also called post-secondary education, third-level is an optional final stage of regular learning that occurs after completion of secondary education. It is delivered at colleges, universities and technology, and through certain college-level institutions, including vocational education, trade schools, and other career colleges that award degrees. Third level education at non-degree level is at times offered to as ulterior education as distinct from higher education.

Around the world, Higher Education Institutions are being cheered up to social responsibility and community engagement in their and research functions on the bygone decennial. The declaration from the second UNESCO Conference on higher education held in Paris in July 2009 stated apparently that, 'higher education has the social responsibility to advance our understanding of multifaceted matter and our capability to react them. Through its core missions of teaching, research and service, it should command society to create universal knowledge to address universal challenges, nutrition safety, weather change, water management, renewable energy and public health.'



Social Responsibility has become an increasingly important concept universal, and it has become part of the debate about competitiveness and sustainability in the context of universalization. Social Responsibility means many various areas including the following: the need to strengthen civil commitment and active citizenship; to provide services to the community through community engagement and outreach; to promote economic and national development; to promote ethical approaches to issues; to develop a sense of civil citizenship by exciting the students and the academic and administrative staff to provide social services to their local community; to promote environmental promises for local and universal sustainable development; to develop local and universal human resources; to spread human knowledge through excellence research and education for the nation and for humanity.

#### Reviewed Studies:

**Singh & Tandon (2017)** in their study “*Community Engagement as A Way Forward for Sustainable Rural Society*” In the context of higher education, one of the most potential tools for ensuring rural improvement is community engagement. By differing from ‘defeated extension’, it makes benefits for novelty, in a way that rural tendency can be complete where its most needed, rather than age-old instructions of sanitation drives, blood donation camps etc. With an eye on SDG targets, community engagement in rural areas can be strategically planned around key matter like economic improvement, environmental preservation, women empowerment, water & sanitation, rural education, rural infrastructure etc. Each of these can be taken up in the form of service-learning assignments, community-based research initiatives, new courses at universities, socially innovative projects etc. Similarly **Singha (2017)** in his study “*Gauging the Impact of Community University Engagement Initiatives in India*” The role of ‘higher education’- which has been historically recognized as a public good – has assumed increasing importance, especially in light of its function of producing knowledge for societal development and sustainability. In recent decades, universal improvement agendas and institution incentive extremely challenging HEIs need to develop reciprocally helpful fellowship with exotic stakeholders and co-create wisdom for addressing different socio-economic challenges in society, and acquire the sustainable development goals. The quicker challenges that our society faces today, necessitates the re-emphasis of principles of CUE as priority areas in our higher education framework. Therefore, the importance of impact of any CUE intervention is uncontested. It is this impact which determines the sustainability and value of the concerned action, and provides prescriptions for future actions. In another study by **Brammer, Jackson and Matten (2012)** entitled “*Social Responsibility and Institutional Theory: New Perspective on Private Governance*” Social Responsibility has become a diffusive topic in the business literature, but has hugely frowzy the role of institutions. This introducing article to the Special matter of Socio-Economic Review examines the potent achievement of institutional theory to understanding SR as a mode of governance. This perspective suggests going beyond grounding SR in the voluntary behavior of companies, and understanding the larger historical and political determinants of whether and in what forms incorporations take on social responsibilities. Institutional theory seems to be a promising avenue to explore how the boundaries between business and society are constructed in different ways, and flourish our understanding of the usefulness of SR within the wider institutional land of economic governance. **Truscott, Bartlett, Trwoniak (2009)** in their paper “*The reputation*



of Corporate Social Responsibility industry in Australia” in Australian marketing journal, based on case study methodology. On the base of the interview of key individuals of arts in Australia, the term CSR has been narrated. The industrialist expressed that CSR increasingly has become significant. They contributed their visions of CSR in economic, legal and moral roles of business in community. Beside this, the industrialist vision CSR as a model of corporate fame.

#### **Statement of the Problem:**

Keeping in view the above illustrations the statement of the problem is presented as: *Engagement As A Social Responsibility Of Higher Education Institutions: An Exploratory Study*

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To find out the present status of Community Engagement practices as Social Responsibility taken care by the Higher Education Institutions.
2. To find out the problems of Community Engagement activities as Social Responsibility of Higher Education Institutions.
3. To find out the solutions for implementing Community Engagement programs as Social Responsibility of Higher education Institutions.

#### **Research Questions:**

1. What is the present status of Community Engagement as Social Responsibility of Higher Education Institutions?
2. What are the problems of implementing Community Engagement activities as Social Responsibility of Higher Education Institutions?
3. What are the solutions for implementing Community Engagement programs as Social responsibility of Higher Education Institutions?

#### **Methodology:**

**Method:** Here in this study Descriptive Survey method was used.

**Population:** The students and teachers of Visva-Bharati were the population in this study.

**Sample & Sampling Technique:** 18 teachers and 180 students were selected by purposive sampling from 9 Bhavanas. 2 departments were selected randomly from each Bhavanas and from each selected department 1 teacher and 10 students were selected randomly.

**Calculations:** Percentage & pie-chart were used in this study.

#### **Data Analysis:**

In the present study data analysis was done as per the objectives.

#### **Objective 1: To find out the present status of Community Engagement practices as Social Responsibility taken care by the Higher Education Institutions.**

To analyse the first objective the present status of Community Engagement practices as Social Responsibility taken care by the Higher Education Institutions. The researcher used a questionnaire on community engagement as a social responsibility of higher education institution.

**Table-1 Showing present status of Community Engagement practices as Social Responsibility taken care by the Higher Education Institutions**

Departments	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Department of Social Work	70	35
Department of Rural Studies	50	25
Department of Education	39	20
Department of Agricultural Science	39	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Table-1 shows that the 4 Bhavanas of Visva-Bharati were directly involved in community engagement as a Social Responsibility, those Bhavanas are Department of Social Work, Department of Rural Studies, Department of Education and Department of Agricultural Science. Most practices going on in Department of social work; 35% activities are commencing in this department then Department of Rural Studies 25%, then Department of Education and Department of Agricultural Science each 20%.

For better understanding a graph is generated from the obtained data showing present status of Community Engagement practices as Social Responsibility taken care by the Higher Education Institutions as below-

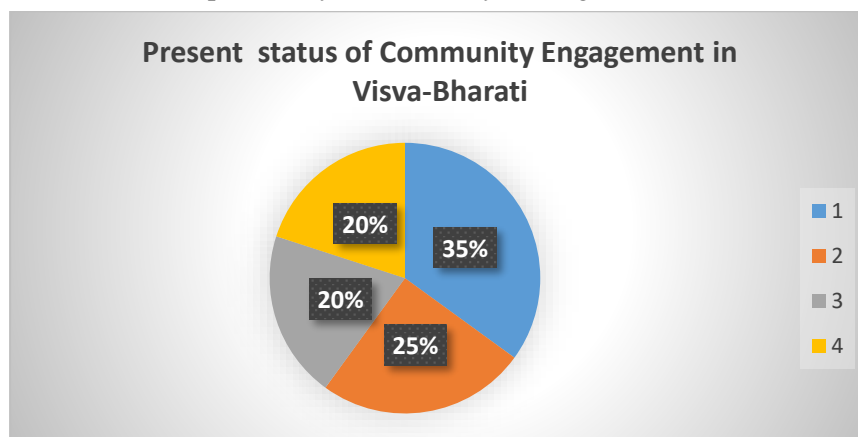


Figure-1 Present status of Community Engagement Practices

Researcher observed at the time of data collection that department of Social Work is more involve on Community Engagement practice as a social responsibility. Like, field work, blood donation camp, organize awareness programmes, health camps, Disability camps and cleanliness camps, NCC, village placement programme, and so many activities going on this department. Researcher also observed that Department of Education is also engaged in various community practices like; various students were going to tribal area to teach them free of cost, NSS volunteers were actively participate in Poush Mela to help people. So, it was very much evident that various kinds of activities were going on in these departments. Students and teachers were equally involved in these programmes.



**Objective 2: To find out the problems for implementing Community Engagement programs as Social Responsibility of Higher education Institutions.**

To analyze the data as per the second objective; problems of community engagement activities were asked through a questionnaire on community engagement as a social responsibility of higher education institution. After analysing the data, researcher found so many problems on community engagement activities. These problems were listed below-

- Not engaging and maintaining community involvement programme.
- Overcoming differences between and among academics and the community.
- Working with non-traditional communities.
- Overcoming competing priorities and institutional differences.
- One of the challenges is how to ensure that those community members whose voices are heard are representative of the community.
- Some of the teachers were not meet with panchayat members for community engagement and various people were not participating in this engagement.
- Maximum departments have no course about community engagement.
- Various teacher and student did not know the term community engagement. This is the main problems.

So, researcher observed that various problems were there in this programme. Students were not active to work in the field, many times they also not attend these community engagement programmes.

**Objective 3: To find out the solutions for implementing Community Engagement programs as Social Responsibility of Higher education Institutions.**

To analyze the third objective, solutions for implementing community engagement programs the researcher used a questionnaire on community engagement as a social responsibility of higher education institution. And researcher was found that people are talking some solution for implementing community engagement program. Those solutions are-

1. Institutions were encouraging their students to be a part of community engagement.
2. It is important to carry out social events because it leads to the development of the society and very impactful events has to be organised so that it can influence and make people more eager to work for humanity.
3. More people are involved in community service project to take the project on a new level and help people on a large scale.
4. We should prepare curriculum in such a way that students are involve in social engagement.
5. Two different generations should come together and take up one task, so each can learn from one another, different approaches to solve one problem.
6. In our institution mainly for PG students need to start with more social activities, contribution of funds from students for a nominal value has to be added in the college fees. Students have to be encouraged through seminars for environmental protection.



7. Social community engagement should be encouraged from the primary level of the student and making them feel how social involvement is important in one's lives.
8. There should be some marks for this activity and it should be mandatory.

Thus, after analyzing the data researcher concluded that above mentioned implementation programs are really needed in Higher Education Institutions.

### Conclusion:

The investigator collected the pertinent data personally with the help of relevant tools. The data has been analysed methodologically and findings were derived after analysis of the data. The investigator on the basis of the findings arrived at certain conclusions.

The findings of the present study Higher Education Institutions will have to engage in more and more regionally based research and community engagement. This will also foster student engagement and inclusive growth manifold. Universities being more socially relevant will only tap the untapped potential of Higher Education Institutions, student community and teaching fraternity.

Educational institutions have to be more socially relevant to explore deeper dimensions of their prime functions of teaching and research. These explorations not only will benefit all the stakeholders but will also throw open various opportunities to build competencies required for the future among the student community. Identifying social problems and finding solutions for the same will develop deeper understanding of the subjects that students are studying. Higher Education Institutions will build greater potential in teaching-learning and research aspects. Experiential learning is the key that can lead to greater and lasting impact on students. It bridges the gap between theory and practice.

Community engagement will sensitize everyone towards societal causes, concerns and contribution at an experiential level. Higher Education Institutions will then be able to imbibe social value along with economic value among students.

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