

ETHICS IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ENDEAVOR TOWARDS BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ALUMNI BOND

PUJA KHATRI¹ & YUKTI AHUJA²

¹Associate Professor, University School of Management Studies, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University,
Dwarka, Delhi, India

²Assistant Professor, Jagan Institute of Management Studies, Institutional Area, Rohini, Delhi, India

ABSTRACT

Education forms the backbone of a nation and is one of the most important indicators of a country's growth and development. Higher education in India has seen a transition in the last decade where from a nobler venture it has acquired the status of a "big business". This has led to a compromise on certain major ideals which have always been at the core of educational institutions. Lately the institutions have realized the potential of being ethically and morally upright. This assessment led to the dawn of more ethical practices at higher education institutions for the benefit of all stakeholders. This paper seeks to explore if the alumni, who are the most critical stakeholders for an institution value the moral and ethical training that they receive during their student life. If the ethical foundation that they receive at the institution makes them ethically competent, also, will it bring them back to their institution whenever required? For the study, a survey was conducted to identify the relationship between ethical practices and training in higher education institutions and alumni willingness for a long term association with their alma mater.

The universe for the study comprises higher education institutions in and around Delhi NCR, India. The data has been collected through a self constructed questionnaire and techniques of correlation, t- test have been used through spss version 17.0 for data analysis. The key findings of the research show a positive correlation between faculty being instrumental in building an ethical institution and potential of inculcating moral behavior in students by institutions practicing ethics. ($p < .01$, $r = .254$). There is a positive correlation between competency to take ethical decisions in testing times and Beliefs and values inculcated by the institution lay basis for ethical decision making ($p < .01$, $r = .495$), a positive correlation between feeling a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and willingness to participate in the institutions activities even after passing out ($p < .01$, $r = .304$) and a strong positive correlation between feeling a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and willingness to come back to the institution to give professional inputs ($p < .01$, $r = .588$).

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Alumni, Ethics, India

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Scenario in India

The higher education system in India has grown in a remarkable way, particularly in the last decade, to become one of the largest systems of its kind and has made waves in the international arena. It has evolved in distinct and divergent streams with each stream monitored by an apex body, indirectly controlled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

World Bank statistics show that higher education enrollment is a leading indicator of economic growth. When a country substantially increases the number of university students it educates, that country tends to enjoy a spike in economic growth in the decade that follows. It happened with Japan and Korea in the early and late 1980s respectively. Increasing higher education enrolment is vital to India's ability to compete in a global economy, as economic strength and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita are closely linked to a country's higher education enrolment ratio. In order to increase India's competitiveness, it is necessary to improve the availability of high quality higher education. The current level of GER¹ in India stands at a figure of 12.4% and compares very low compared to world average of 23.2%, 36.5% for developing countries and 45% for developed countries. The government thus has an enormous task in hand to improve the GER to bring it somewhere close to other developing countries. India plans to raise the GER from current level to 30% by the year 2020. In the same light many foreign universities are gearing up to set up base in the country which calls for astuteness at India's end. The stakeholders in the system are many, including government, students (Indian as well as foreign), education entrepreneurs, regulatory bodies, faculty, administrative bodies. The key success factors for higher education institutions include all the services of the education industry - infrastructure, faculty and staff, updated programmes and curriculum, premium placements, superior quality processes etc.

Few other important remedial measures would include significant expansion of capacity including infrastructure (brick & click), teaching staff, making schemes to make higher education accessible, generation of funding, provision of technology support and addressing the issues of quality in all respects so that proliferation does not result in the dilution of quality.

Fifty-one percent of India's population is under the age of 25. Without proper access to education the country's demographic dividend could turn into a demographic disaster (Uttara Dukkupati, 2010). The statistics are intimidating however, the onus of making the most of these numbers lies on the shoulders of the citizens who are also the stakeholders in the education sector. According to ICRIER, in 1950 India had 263,000 students enrolled in 750 colleges, which were affiliated with 30 universities. By 2005, the numbers had grown phenomenally: 11 million students in 17,000 colleges affiliated with 230 universities along with 10 million students more in 6,500 vocational institutions. Though the numbers bespeak of the Indian potential, still we would have to nearly quadruple existing college seats and more than quadruple the number of professors to achieve the 20 percent GER by 2014 as cited in the Venture Intelligence report.

Union Ministry of Human Resource Development launched its ambitious programme to revamp the higher education sector in the country, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). Through RUSA it aims to cover 316 states public universities and 13,024 colleges across the country. The government is looking at bringing various reforms to improve the quality of higher education sector by creation of a State Higher Education Council, creation of accreditation agencies, preparation of the state perspective plans, commitment of certain stipulated share of funds towards RUSA, academic, sectoral and institutional governance reforms, filling faculty positions etc. As per the RUSA document, greater emphasis will be laid on the improvement of the quality of teaching-learning processes in order to produce employable and competitive graduates, post-graduates and PhDs. With respect to the planning and funding approach, some key changes are

¹ *Footnote: GROSS Enrolment Ratio (GER) is a statistical measure used by the United Nations to measure education index of a nation. In the context of higher education, it measures the total population of all ages enrolled in different education programs to the total population of the country in the age group of 18-23.*

envisaged; (a) funding will be more impact and result oriented, (b) various equity related schemes will be integrated for a higher impact, (c) instead of unplanned expansion, there will be a focus on consolidating and developing the existing system adding capacities and (d) there will be a greater focus on research and innovation (Indian education review.com, 2013). The efforts have been many but the impact has been nominal.

The higher education sector, owing to its huge potential, holds very promising prospects. With an estimated 150 million people in the age group of 18-23 years, the sector offers one of the most attractive yet highly complex markets for the private/foreign players. The lure of the sunshine sector has pulled many private players in the race. The business model orientation of the new age education entrepreneur has defeated the philanthropic cause with which the temples of education were established decades back. On the other hand, the competitiveness in the education sector has had a multitudinous growth; there are innumerable institutions which have become the factories of manufacturing hundred thousands of “Student units” with minimal resources and facilities. The result has been an unemployable flock which can not be expected to contribute to the growth of the economy. The quality has been sacrificed for quantity. The sheer numbers of low quality service providers has called for unethical practices in the field of higher education. There is an increase in the cases of low quality services, capitation fee, nepotism, unfairness etc. The level of competition has literally led some institutions to work only on number of enrolments in a batch, ignoring the sheer basis of their existence in delivering quality education. Just as some land would be enough to set up a plant, or a manufacturing unit similarly it will be equally sufficient to start an institution. Since, there is hardly any barrier except for some permissions here and there, the competition is now neck deep. With one building, minimal faculty and staff, disorganized procedures, unstructured programmes, unfair fee structures the set up begins to run. With such systems in place the credibility and sustenance of higher education is extremely questionable and needs much deliberation.

India’s aspirations to establish a knowledge society in the context of increasing globalization, is based on the assumption that higher and technical education essentially empowers people with the requisite competitive skills and knowledge. It has been realized that it is the quality of education that prepares one for all pursuits of life and in the absence of an acceptable level of quality, higher education becomes a mere formalism devoid of any purpose or substance. The question that seeks attention is that how can values of fairness, equity and solidarity remain central in the market-driven and highly competitive higher education sector today? These are the stalwarts of excellence and their presence is imperative for a successful tomorrow. In the same light what mechanisms are needed at institutional and state level to respond effectively to the perceived dilemma of having to choose between quality and quantity? It is essential to deliberate on these issues because they determine the ethical quotient of an institution which has a very high degree of influence on the students. The researchers propose that rethinking on the values practiced by an institution will have a significant impact in its quest for excellence.

The Ethical Quotient in Higher Education

The Education system lays foundation for the next generation of professionals; it is hence a pre requisite for the institutions to stress on the ethical and moral development of students. Colleges and universities are custodians of knowledge and the possession of knowledge is the source of power, understood here as the ability to influence decisions in contemporary society, significantly affecting the quality of economic and social life throughout the world. In today’s world education needs to be seen as consisting of three components, namely, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom, sequentially each one leading to the next so that we ultimately end up with wisdom. While knowledge backed by information developed

human skills and capabilities to achieve many things in the best way possible, it is wisdom that guided one to decide the priorities. Ultimately, everything one undertook had to be purposeful not only to oneself but more so to the society one lived in. Thus, insofar as colleges and universities create and disseminate knowledge within a particular society, they are institutions with moral responsibilities to maintain the well-being of that society. It is the onus of the institutions to prepare the students for the forthcoming challenges of their personal and professional lives. Apart from the focus on the technical needs of the students it is expected of them to train students in ethical and moral decision making.

The word Ethics has been derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means character and from Latin word 'Mores' which means customs. It can be defined as the moral values, rules or standards governing the conduct of a particular group, profession or culture. Thus group, organization, professional and cultural ethics co-exist with one another. Together they influence the set of values. Apart from the meanings culled out from the dictionary, there are several dimensions which are relevant for this study. Aristotle was one of the first great philosophers to study the subject. To him, ethics was more than a moral, religious or legal concept. To determine what is ethically good for the individual and for the society, he said, it is necessary to possess three virtues of practical wisdom: temperance, courage and justice. Ethics has also been defined as a systematic investigation into the beliefs and the judgement about what is morally right or wrong and morally good and evil.

A realization of redefining the principles of existence has set in among the stakeholders. Institutions have awakened to the significance of ethics in education. Ethics education, as defined by Langenderfer and Rockness, is more than studying the code of professional conduct, but rather a process whereby individuals become more consciously involved in making ethical decisions (Harold, Q. Langenderfer and Joanne W. Rockness, 1989).

One of the main goals of ethics education should be to encourage students to recognize social responsibilities within their profession (Cheryl R. Lehman, 1988). Self regulation is vital in applying profession's ethical standards in actual practice. Ineffective professional self-regulation inevitably leads to government intervention. The goals of ethics education are creating an awareness of ethical dilemmas and providing methods of resolution. Most of the Higher education institutions in India play their moral responsibility by including a course paper on ethics.

The initiative is a sheer pretext for many and a forced regulation for others. Frequent media reports concerning corruption in business and government bespeak the failure of the educational system in developing morally correct individuals. Institutions are in a rat race to prove their credentials better than the others which might promise only a short term advantage. However, Strategic planning for the future must emphasize the learning community as the institutionalization of a program that responds to concern for values and ethics in higher education (Gabelnick et al. 1990). It is imperative that the institutions understand that only an ethically strong system will be able to turn its stakeholders into staunch followers who will deliver excellence for the organization that can be sustainable for generations to come.

Ethics and Indian Higher Education System

It is believed that India's higher education system can be expected to be better aligned to industry be more transparent and inclusive, provided the Government is able to create a regulatory environment and put in place vigorous implementation, monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms.

India's higher education system faces challenges on three fronts:

- **Expansion:** The gross enrolment ratio of india needs to be improved in order to be at par with the developing and developed countries
- **Excellence:** In terms of processes, faculty, networks, accreditations etc.
- **Equity:** With respect to the inter-state disparity, urban rural divide, gender discrimination etc.

For expansion; in the next 10 years India's education sector needs investment worth \$150 billion. India will need 1,000 more universities and 45,000 more colleges to cater to an estimated 40 million students by 2020. This was revealed by Human Resource Development (HRD) minister Kapil Sibal who also called for "collaboration" from the Indian diaspora to strengthen the sector (Education Master, 2011). India has seen a rapid growth in the number of institutions that have opened up in the country.

With increased competition, the focus on quality education is lost. With swift changes in the corporate environment there has been a compromise on the basic deliverables of education. In some states political muscle is used to get permissions from the regulatory bodies. Insufficient infrastructure, compromise on experienced faculty, unfair admission procedures, inadequate staff keep the investment low without ensuring whether there is a gain at the receiving end. The focus is only on the enrolment numbers. All this has called for the regulatory bodies to keep a check on the functioning of these systems. The staff, the faculty, the management each one associated with the system is under the ethical scrutiny. Since these together decide the fate of a higher education institution, commitment from each sphere is called for. Expansion should not be achieved by compromising on excellence.

The progress of students can be attained only when they see everything around them being processed in the most honest ways possible for which the university/institution needs to keep their day to day functions constantly under radar. Students are the true representatives of the institution. If they are not convinced with the systems they would not recommend their alma mater to others which will ultimately ruin the reputation of the institution. It is proposed that higher education institutions with strong ethical commitment will survive in the times to come because the very proponents of these institutions that are the students will guard their almatmater and will remain committed to it and it is indeed the quality of their educational experience that can influence their concern for the almatmater significantly.

Alumni Advantage

Students make an institution and their role at all times is invaluable to the success of the organization. Students are unique in that they will forever fill a role—whether they are current students or long graduated. Alumni create the university's reputation, which relies in large part on how good are their relations with each other. This process is self-feeding as well. If an institution is renowned for its ethical operations then the products of the institution are expected to be safe guard their moral values. Such market dynamics open avenues for the new graduates who will have better job prospects because they went to a well-known institution, and the process will continue.

An emerging factor in college and university rankings is the amount of alumni participation colleges have. This isn't surprising, considering an active alumni base generally indicates that past graduates believe that they had a quality educational experience.

For an institution alumni are an asset, they have many roles:

- Alumni participation is often viewed as a barometer of alumni satisfaction.

- There is strength in numbers and a community is only as strong as the people who support it.
- Alumni may come back to give professional inputs
- Alumni can participate in institutions' activities
- Alumni can build the corporate network for an institution
- They can spread a positive word around about their institution
- They can recommend their alma mater to others
- Alumni are a mirror of the college's reputation
- Alumni practice and promote the skills and qualities learnt from their institutions
- The strength of successful alumni helps building a positive brand image

The aforementioned merits lay the genesis of an Alumni institution interface which can culminate in to a win win situation for both Alumni as well as the institution. The student's environment is defined by the institution's curricular and extracurricular characteristics, and that experience affects their future earning power and their ability to establish themselves professionally. By far the alumni contribution to the institution has been measured on the scale of donations and funds that they can arrange for their alma mater. For example, many scholars have analyzed how institutional characteristics such as undergraduate enrollment, tuition levels, endowment levels, student to faculty ratios, graduation rates, and organizational identity impact alumni giving (see Leslie and Ramey 1988; Caboni 2003; Gunslaus 2004; Wunnava and Lauze 2001).

In the increasingly competitive marketplace of higher education, colleges and universities are examining new ways to leverage the influence of their graduates for the benefit of their institutions. Alumni volunteers are also valuable to their institutions beyond their professional and networks. Through college advisory boards, prominent alumni lend their experiences and expertise to help higher education leaders formulate strategic directions for their institutions (Weerts 1998). The literature clearly states that alumni involvement with their alma mater is a direct result of emotional attachment, quality of relationships, academic success and satisfaction with the student experience. Excellence in the practices and procedures to get a competitive advantage has been adopted as a core value and guiding principle for development in the twenty-first century in many parts of the world. The education system that is proposed in this paper is the one that looks at long term viability; institutions that can survive generations to come based on their ethical vigor. There have been an increasing number of studies on how to deliver better higher education, the focus of this research however is on how ethical practices in an institution can build strong student-institution bonds which can deliver excellence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study undertaken is an endeavor to understand the relationship between ethical practices in higher education institution and student perception of their continual role as alumni. A self constructed questionnaire was used for the purpose of the survey. The questionnaire had 30 items related to the perception of students regarding ethical practices at institutions and other variables related to the study. A five point likert agreement scale has been used to measure the responses. To check the validity of the questionnaire, it was subject to review by experts. Reliability of the same was

computed to be Cronbach Alpha .83. According to Nunnally (1978, p. 245) the instruments used in basic research have reliability of about .70 or better.

Our universe comprises higher education institutions in and around Delhi NCR. The technique of Multi stage sampling has been adopted where in at the first stage stratified sampling has been used. Institution running technical and management courses in and around Delhi NCR were considered for the study. In the second stage 7 institutions were selected as per convenience of the researcher. In the third stage, systematic sampling was done to select the students. For this every second student was administered the questionnaire. Out of 250 questionnaires sent to the respondents we received 167 completed questionnaires. The questionnaire was self constructed and non- disguised. Also, websites, journals and magazines have been used for collecting the secondary data. In the light of the above discussion, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

H1: There is a positive correlation between perception of respondents regarding Faculty being instrumental in building an ethical institution and the potential of inculcating moral behavior in students by institutions practicing ethics.

H2: There is a positive correlation between competency to take ethical decisions in testing times and beliefs and values inculcated by the institution lay basis for ethical decision making

H3: There is a positive correlation between taking pride in the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and Competency to take ethical decisions in testing times

H4: The correlation between feeling a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and willingness to participate in the institutions activities even after passing out is positive

H5: The correlation between feeling a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and willingness to come back to the institution to give professional inputs is positive

H6: There is a positive correlation between being the alma mater of an ethical institution gives happiness and contentment and referring the institution to others

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pearson Moment Correlation

Table 1: Correlation between Perception of Respondents Regarding Faculty Being Instrumental in Building an Ethical Institution and the Potential of Inculcating Moral Behavior in Students by Institutions Practicing Ethics

		Faculty is Instrumental in Building an Ethical Institution	Ethical Practices at Institutions Instill Moral Behavior in Students
Faculty is instrumental in building an ethical institution	Pearson Correlation	1	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	167	167
Ethical practices at institutions instill moral behavior in students	Pearson Correlation	.254**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	167	167

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is a positive correlation between faculty being instrumental in building an ethical institution and potential of inculcating moral behavior in students by institutions practicing ethics. ($p < .01$, $r = .254$). Faculty is one of the most important pillars of strength for an institution. Majority of literature on faculty role in education bespeaks the merit of the teaching fraternity. Faculty is mindful of their position as a role model to students; therefore both in their personal and professional life, they carry an ethical demeanor.

Digital technologies have certainly revolutionized all aspects of our daily lives, and the world of academia is no exception. Several attempts have been made to replace faculty with machinery but the results have been appalling because machine can only assist human but surely cannot substitute them.

If Faculty work in Compliance with policies and procedures issued at college regarding the use of property, facilities, finances and ICT in their educational setting; they conduct assessment- and examination-related tasks with integrity and in compliance with official regulations and procedures there are bright chances that the students will have a great learning experience. They represent themselves, their experience, professional position and qualifications honestly, they follow a code of conduct to adopt an informed approach to their teaching and its contexts and to reflect on the good and correct practices. The higher the ethical credentials of the faculty, the ethical the practices in an institution. This ethical institution is accountable for the moral development of students. An environment of good moral conduct can be nurtured in the institution that practices ethics to their core. Hence H1 is accepted.

Table 2: Correlation between Competency to Take Ethical Decisions in Testing Times and Beliefs and Values Inculcated by the Institution Lay Basis for Ethical Decision Making

		Competency to Take Ethical Decisions in Testing Times	Beliefs and Values Inculcated by the Institution Lay Basis for my Ethical Decision Making
Competency to take ethical decisions in testing times	Pearson Correlation	1	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
Beliefs and values inculcated by the institution lay basis for my ethical decision making	Pearson Correlation	.495**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The capacity to lead an ethical life is intensely affected by the ethics of the organization within which we operate. An ethical environment can help in ingraining ethical capacity in individuals. Ethical behavior is more than a code or an act: it's a habit and that is how in the longer run it will reap benefits. Honesty and integrity aren't fads but policy measures that ensure future opportunities leading to continual brilliance. Similarly, an Ethical institution focuses on the extent to which it is possible for it to be fair and just and thus impact the students' lives. This motivates them to be associated with the institution just as in an ethical organization the employees stay ethical towards their work. According to a study, among those who felt they worked for an ethical organisation, 55% were truly loyal. For those who didn't feel they worked for an ethical organisation, the loyalty figure was 9% (The Wise Marketer, August 2003).

An institution that will be free from corruption, nepotism and discriminatory practices will always be able to build a loyal base of stakeholders. It is only an ethics practicing institution that can do the role modeling of its students in the direction of ethics and morality. Once the students realize the potential of an ethical mind set they tend to vet their decision

making with an ethical fervor. The ethically empowered individuals will have the capability to focus on the potential of integrity in decision making. The aptitude to handle every situation is a byproduct of ethical training that the students receive at their alma mater. It is indeed a scholarship which stays with the students and makes them proficient to manage problems both at the personal and professional front. There is a positive and significant correlation between competency to take ethical decisions in testing times and Beliefs and values inculcated by the institution lay basis for ethical decision making ($p < .01$, $r = .495$). Hence, the hypothesis H2 is accepted.

Table 3: Correlation between Taking Pride in the Institution for Inculcating Ethical Behavior and Competency to Take Ethical Decisions in Testing Times

		Sense of Pride towards the Institution for Inculcating Ethical Behavior	Competency to Take Ethical Decisions in Testing Times
sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.317**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
Competency to take ethical decisions in testing times	Pearson Correlation	.317**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Respondents mentioned that they do feel that they are competent to take ethical decisions in trying times. The competency has a significant correlation with a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior ($p < .01$, $r = .317$). They believe that in testing times they feel fit to respond in a righteous manner. The roots of this strength lie in the formative years of higher education where such values are inculcated in these individuals. They take pride in the institution because the moral values embedded in them have proven valuable in their lives. Hence, H3 is accepted.

Table 4: Correlation between Sense of Pride towards the Institution for Inculcating Ethical Behavior and Willingness to Participate in the Institutions Activities Even after Passing out

		Willingness to Participate in the Institutions Activities Even after Passing out	Sense of Pride towards the Institution for Inculcating Ethical Behavior
Willingness to participate in the institutions activities even after passing out	Pearson Correlation	1	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior	Pearson Correlation	.304**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It is a world of relationships. The alumni associations have become very strong and effective in terms of providing inputs to the institutions. In higher education, alumni have been seen as an asset who will be of great importance. The more the sense of pride that alumni will take in their institution the more the likelihood that they will come back to their almamater to give back. It has been seen that people graduating from the Ivy League generally like to mention everywhere that they are Harvard, Kellogg's, IIM, IIT pass outs. For instance wearing alumni t shirts is one way to show that you are

proud to be associated with the institution. This emotional connection is due to those extra initiatives taken by the institutions which are neglected by others.

A morally strong individual will always have a sense of gratitude for his institution for chiseling out the best in him. These moral principles can give an advantage in their career because ethical decisions are the most sustainable decisions. Such respondents want to come back and participate in the institutions events wholeheartedly. They can come for alumni forums, cultural events and brand building activities. There is a positive correlation between feeling a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and willingness to participate in the institutions activities even after passing out ($p < .01$, $r = .304$). The hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Table 5: Correlation between Sense of Pride towards the Institution for Inculcating Ethical Behavior and Willingness to Come Back to the Institution to Give Professional Inputs

		Willingness to Come Back to the Institution to Give Professional Inputs	Sense of Pride towards the Institution for Inculcating Ethical Behavior
Willingness to come back to the institution to give professional inputs	Pearson Correlation	1	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	167
sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior	Pearson Correlation	.588**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	167	167

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The essence of a long term association lies in mutual advantage to the stake holders. It can not be built in a day. There are several initiatives which should be taken in order to create a relationship of faith and loyalty. The variable of pride can be a great driver in building an alliance.

If respondents take pride in their alma mater for the ethical values that they have imbibed from it, then they will definitely look for an opportunity to give back to their institution. The willingness to be associated with the institution comes on its own. Many alumni want to come back to their place of learning and share their professional experience, they voluntarily want to participate in lectures, seminars etc.

The experience that they get back into the system for industry academia interface is precious for any organisation. These individuals could develop special programs for the benefit of those who need special attention. In the modern day world where each stakeholder is treated as a partner in the system, professional expertise can be highly useful for the beneficiaries.

It is the alumni who represent the institution, which is a great source of motivation for the learners and source of inspiration for the outside world. There is a very strong Correlation between feeling a sense of pride towards the institution for inculcating ethical behavior and willingness to come back to the institution to give professional inputs ($p < .01$, $r = .588$). Hence, H5 is accepted.

Table 6: Correlation between Being the Alma Mater of an Ethical Institution Gives Happiness and Contentment and Referring the Institution to Others

		Being the Alma Mater of an Ethical Institution Gives Happiness and Contentment	Referring the Institution to Others
Being the almatmater of an Ethical institution gives happiness and contentment	Pearson Correlation	1	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	167	166
Referring the institution to others	Pearson Correlation	.702**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	166	166

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is a very strong and positive correlation between being the alma mater of an Ethical institution gives happiness and contentment and referring the institution to others ($p < .01$, $r = .702$). Students, being ethically qualified possess the contentment of head and heart. The respondents feel that trust, transparency and fairness in an institution lay the foundation for sustainable excellence. This excellence leads to recommendation of the institution in the outside world. Referrals are an offshoot of satisfaction and happiness. A respondent will pass on a positive note to others only when his experience has been delightful and worth sharing with others. In the services industry the role of recommendation is of dire importance, it is experience which matters the most and especially in the case of education it is the most reliable source of promotion. While seeking admission to an institution people generally depend on the reference group suggestions. There cannot be a better and unswerving source of promotion than positive word of mouth. Also, it is not only the student studying in the institution who will spread a positive word but his family and friends will also give a positive feedback about the institution. If an institution can retain the faith of majority of its students from year to year and work towards building their happiness quotient, the referencing will automatically get sturdy. The best public relation is a happy, respectful, professional environment that will keep the students coming back and make the institution grow strength by strength. Hence, the H_6 is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

The higher education system plays a very crucial role in the development of a nation in view of its forward linkage with the corporate, as well as, society at large. It is a human capital intensive sector where people and knowledge mean everything. It cannot be denied that Higher education institutions play a central role in the development of all the stakeholders. All concerned citizens of the country have to realize that it is only a robust, innovative and ebullient higher educational system that can help in transformation of India among the league of developed nations. To meet this challenge it is required that learning experiences in higher education are restructured which means not only teaching, infrastructure and other process modifications but also adopting a completely honest and ethical approach in the system. The paper emphasizes on how ethical practices influence the alumni, who in turn want to give back in all respects to their institution. An institution which wins the faith of the alumni on the basis of its ethical practices will always be able to sustain in the long run. This faith will be carried forward from one generation to another. This requires support of the whole institution, the faculty and staff, the management and the students so that they can actualize the potential of higher education to lead the next generation to excellence in the education system. This will provide institutions with an alumni bond which can

neither be copied nor replicated and will stay for eternity. The alumni can be the most trusted source of promotion and brand building.

Institutions should be made aware that morality is not an issue only when problems arise. Individual responsibility and social welfare is part of the institutional backdrop. For a responsible future ethical concern cannot be ignored. The education system is entrusted with the task of creating today's and tomorrow's leaders who would respond ethically even under intense pressure and are able to respond to societal issues resulting from changing trends in demographics, environmental changes like global warming, commotion in national, world economies. The benchmark that we need to create should be truly stringent in its ethical fervor. The institutions which follow ethics in their day to day operations will be able to build long term association with its alumni. Higher education institutions which have understood the role of ethics in the functioning of the system are putting in continuous efforts towards brand building, achieving a trustworthy reputation and earning a competitive advantage. In the same light it is expected of the policy makers to regulate the functioning of various institutions in terms of corruption, nepotism, capitation etc. and direct their efforts towards providing excellence in education. An educated society is definitely the key to success of a country's growth but an ethically educated society will lay the foundation for a sustainable growth of the whole world. A larger, ethically functioning Indian higher education system should be a national priority and a Bench mark for the world to follow.

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