STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SRINIVAS INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES

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Abstract:

The field of higher education is fast growing in India .India s higher education system is third largest in the world after USA and China. Education system has seen a sea change .The transformations in the education system has created high quality, low-cost education to all sectors in the society. The tier II cities like Mangalore have a number of colleges imparting quality education .Mangalore has become a hub of good education. The foundation for any higher education depends on curricula, pedagogy, faculty research orientation, infrastructure, partnership, funding and good governance/leadership. Learning happens when there is a student centric orientation in the education system. Students are required to be engaged in the college activities and dedicate their college life for professional development. Student engagement leads to industry ready candidates and good social citizen ship among the student community. In order to have quality institutions best practices need to be followed. This paper is an attempt to analyze the case of Srinivas Institute of management studies located in Mangalore in developing student engagement. A focus group interview is conducted to identify critical factors that contribute to student engagement. Various approaches followed to enhance knowledge and impart quality education is studied in detail and a suitable model will be derived to understand student engagement

Index Terms: Student Engagement, Governance, Critical Factors for Student Engagement & Student Centric

1. Introduction:

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/Universities level Institutions & Colleges since Independence in India. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013.

The quantum growth in the Higher Education sector is spear-headed by Universities, which are the highest seats of learning. In India, "University" means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in accordance with the regulations made in this regard under the UGC Act, 1956. Every year, millions of students from within the country and abroad, enter these portals mainly for their graduate, post graduate studies while millions leave these portals for the world outside.

2. Srinivas Group:

On the west coast of India between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea is a beautiful city Mangalore which today is very cosmopolitan in outlook. A sea of modernity welcomes a visitor to this ancient temple town which has grown and today is

proud to have a diversity of cultures. Ancient places of worship, banks, hospitals, hotels, industries and educational institutions dot this magnificent landscape. A. Shama Rao foundation's, Srinivas group of colleges is an endeavor to develop a centre of excellence, imparting quality education, to generate competence and skill to meet the scientific, technological, managerial and socio economic challenges. The Foundation in its bi-decennial milestone serving mankind, manages a plethora of institutes and other social service organizations.

Excellence is the hallmark of Srinivas group of colleges. Excellence, which will deliver professional manpower to the industry and the nation at large. The Group has constantly strived to provide the best of the faculty members and state-of-the art facilities. The students are encouraged and supported not only to excel in academics, but also to develop their personality through co-curricular, extracurricular activities and other extension activities. A. Shama Rao Foundation was specifically established to impart quality and sustainable education to all. This foundation was born out of the belief of Shri A. Shama Rao, that education is the engine to transform society. The "Srinivas Group of Colleges" is one such venture that is sponsored by the A. Shama Rao Foundation.

3. Objectives:
- ✓ To develop a model for student engagement in relation to faculty and top management support
- ✓ To identify factors which influence student engagement at Srinivas institute of management studies

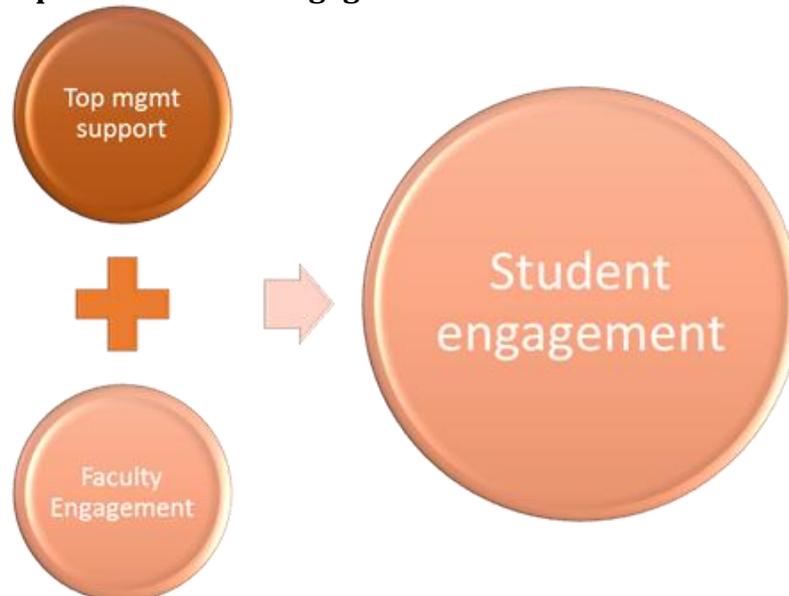**4. Model Developed for Student Engagement:**

Figure 1: This model represents the need of top management support and faculty support to arrive at student engagement

The other factors which influence student engagement can be put forth under the following headings
- ✓ Bridge/Remedial/Add-on/Enrichment Courses
- ✓ Mentoring of students
- ✓ Nurture critical thinking, creativity and scientific temper among the students
- ✓ The various teaching –learning methods
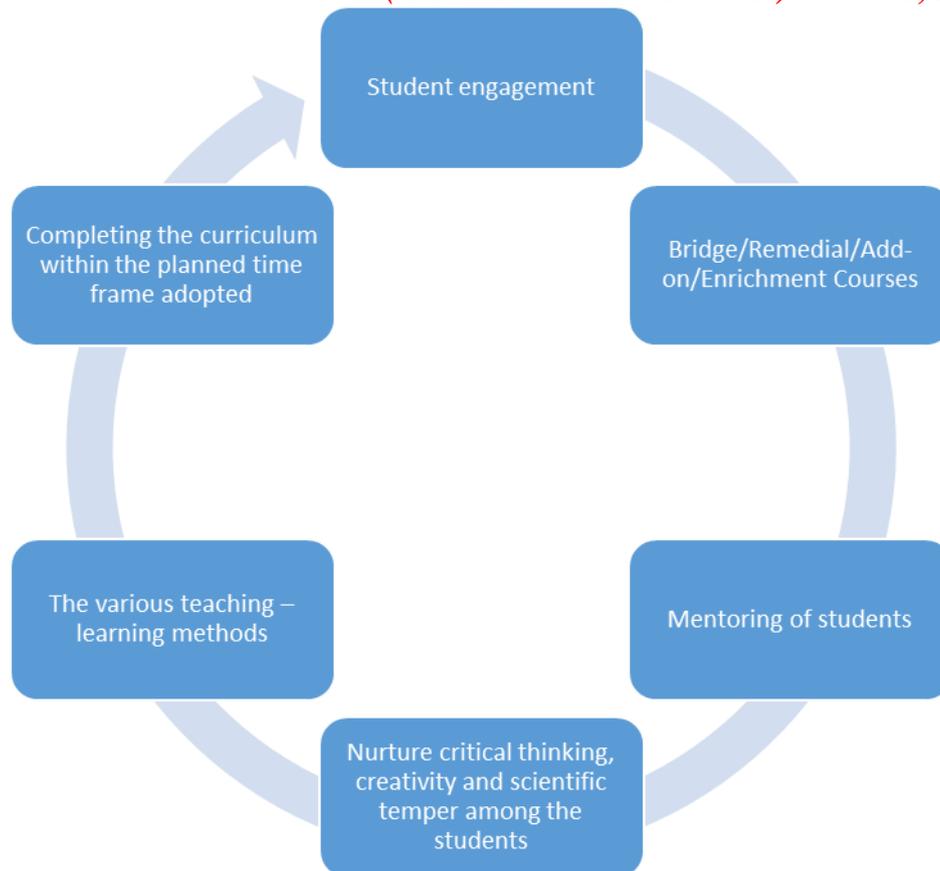- ✓ Completing the curriculum within the planned time frame adopted

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Figure 2: depicts the factors contributing to student engagement at Srinivas College

5. Discussion:

The strategies drawn and deployed by the institution to bridge the knowledge gap of the enrolled students to enable them to cope with the programme of their choice: The College offers variety of Bridge/Remedial/Add-on/Enrichment Courses to bridge the knowledge gap of the enrolled students and to enable them to cope with the programme of their choice like:

- ✓ Bridge course in Mathematics for MBA students
- ✓ Add-on course in Economics for MBA students
- ✓ Add -on course in Accountancy for MBA students with science background
- ✓ Enrichment course in Computer Science for all the PG students
- ✓ Remedial course in English Language for under graduate students.
- ✓ Tutorial classes are engaged for weak students individually.
- ✓ Faculty identifies weak students on the basis of class test papers and internal exams.
- ✓ Sometimes, students also approach faculty individually with doubts in any subject handled by the corresponding faculty. Non teaching hours are spent on giving special attention to them.

The college functions for extended hours on all Saturdays, particularly to provide

Mentoring of Students:

At the beginning of the semester students are divided in small groups and placed under each faculty for mentoring. This is widely done in undergraduate programme. Students fill in a Proforma known as mentor chart which conveys essential basic information pertaining to the personal and family details of the student. The mentors identify the strength and weaknesses of the students and guide the students throughout

their period of study focusing on rectifying mistakes without fault finding attitude. Additionally, weak students are recommended to be admitted in the college hostels situated nearby the college and faculty members are provided accommodation in the same hostel to provide mentoring services to the needy. The institution adopt following strategy to nurture critical thinking, creativity and scientific temper among the students to transform them into life-long learners and innovators:

- ✓ The institutes identify talents/critical thinkers through participation in college activities and competitions, previous performance, participation in classroom discussions, group presentations, performance in semester end exam, participation & involvement in college programs, as well as their attitude and positive thinking.
- ✓ Students are encouraged to boost their critical thinking through organizing and participating in programmmes such as debate, competitions, and marketing exhibitions.
- ✓ Students are also encouraged to participate in such competitions organized by other colleges. By providing information, giving attendance for classes lost, and financing sundry expenses, the institute promotes opportunity.
- ✓ Students are also trained and guided in taking various competitive exams or entry into higher studies to specialize in chosen field.
- ✓ The pedagogy is also styled to incorporate brainstorming sessions, entry test and recapitulations to nurture their critical thinking.
- ✓ Research projects are encouraged and guided by the faculty in all courses to develop creativity. Original contributions are encouraged for presenting in internal or external conferences.
- ✓ EDP cell – The institution has a well developed entrepreneurship development cell. It conducts various activities to create awareness about entrepreneurship and to enhance the entrepreneurship skills among the students. The cell also conducts real time workshops where students get an opportunity to meet and interact with entrepreneurs and understand the real life problems. The students also get to discuss their business plans and make improvisations as per the recommendations given by the experts.
- ✓ Internship and Project Committee – This committee encourages students to come up with ideas to have real time analysis of the problems at their area of study or industry. This will be done as a value addition for students' dissertation and internship work. It supports the students to develop case studies from their project work. It guides the students to develop model and solutions for the real time problems facing by the system or industry.
- ✓ In MCA & BCA program, the students have to do mandatory software projects in a team of 4-5 members in order to sharpen their scientific temper. The best performing team is recognized and rewarded.
- ✓ In MBA program, the finance division of the college conducts mock/virtual investment in share market. Based on one year monitoring, the best performance team will be rewarded.
- ✓ Some of the Institutional Certificate programmes and workshops are identified and designed in such a way so that they become life-long learners and contributes to the society through their innovations.
- ✓ The faculty members are constantly in the pursuit of upgrading themselves through acquiring additional qualification which inspire the students to become life-long learners.

✓ The Opportunity given by way of encouraging subscription of news papers such as economic times and business line inculcate the habit of continued learners as long as they remain in the profession.

The Various Teaching –Learning Methods Adopted in Our Institute are:

✓ **Project Based Teaching:** Faculty members give minor projects to group of students in different courses. On the completion of the projects, the team has to present the same and the faculty will award suitable marks/grades.

✓ **Lab Based Teaching:** The Institute also has three computer labs with internet facility. The students are taken to the lab by the faculty members to provide them real time information on subjects.

✓ **Experiential learning:** To improve the understanding of the subject case studies are framed jointly by faculty and students recalling their experience during visits and observations. This includes managerial styles, superior and subordinate relationship, interpersonal communication, problem solving etc. For this purpose the students are sent on short-term assignments to the industry to have practical experience on working of industry.

✓ **Theater Based Learning:** The students are required to enact / explain certain concept through theater performance like role play, drama or short play on the assigned topics. Street plays are enacted in public locations to create awareness on social issues.

✓ **Simulation Game:** To give a real time experience of the business problems, simulation games are played in the classrooms. Students get a real feel of decision making, problem analysis and problem solving.

✓ **Video Case Study:** Faculties assigned students with special projects like making video case studies on specific topics.

✓ **Activity Based Learning:** Students are involved in various activities and management games related to the topics from the subject.

✓ **Technology Based Learning:** The internet, LCD, different application software etc. enables technology based learning.

✓ **Learning from Nature & Environment:** Rural camp conducted for the students of social work and National Service Scheme are meant to learn from nature and environment.

✓ **Community Based Learning:** Various activities conducted in the communities for MSW students and the activities conducted by the College NGO by name SIRRA provides community based learning.

✓ **Field Work Based Learning:** MSW course require specific number of field work practicum as part of the curriculum. This is meant to sensitize the social work students to social issues.

✓ **Analytical Learning:** Quantitative techniques of analysis are used in learning mostly by MCA students and also by finance specialization students of MBA.

✓ **Team Based Learning:** The sum of individual performance is always less than teams' performance. Hence in software development team based learning is made use of.

✓ **Observation based Learning:** Demonstrations such as role play facilitates observation based learning.

✓ **Social service Based Learning:** Community interactions help build and develop interpersonal relationship through which social service is channelized.

The Challenges Faced by the Institution in Completing the Curriculum Within the Planned Time Frame and Calendar and the Institutional Approaches to Overcome

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these:

Major challenges in completing the curriculum within the planned time frame has been very unusual. However, the following precautions are taken for any deviations from the time frame:

- ✓ **Technology Based Learning:** Through promoting the use of LCD projectors in classrooms lot of time could be saved than otherwise.
- ✓ **Teaching Plan:** This is a tool for dividing the entire syllabus in to practical classroom sessions which could anticipate the required number of classes beforehand so as to prepare students for the examination.
- ✓ **College Calendar:** It creates an impact of time limits available for learning so that pace of the teaching is adjusted accordingly.
- ✓ **Study Materials:** The lucidity of narration in the study material makes learning comfortable and easy for the students and to cope with time constraints.
- ✓ **Additional Classes:** In case required, additional classes are also conducted to compensate any loss of time.
- ✓ **Expertise of the Faculty:** The faculty are competent and experienced enough to handle such situations to complete the syllabus in time.

The Institutional Effort to Monitor and Evaluate the Quality of Teaching Learning:

- ✓ **Regular Conduct of Internal Examinations:** Internal examinations are conducted for all the courses at regular intervals as planned in the academic calendar which is prepared by the HOD in consultation with the academic faculty at the beginning of the calendar year/semester.
- ✓ **Result Analysis:** The results of the University examinations are analysed through segregating percentage of students in terms of achievements as reflected in their marks scored in each examination. The faculty who has been engaging classes for the concerned subjects will be responsible for the poor performance of the students.
- ✓ **Feedback from Students:** The College collects feedback from students in a proper format at the end of every semester and is reviewed by the principal. This feedback is also conveyed to the concerned faculty for rectification and improvement.
- ✓ **Class Visits of Head of the Department and Principal:** A direct and first hand appraisal of the classes is obtained by the HOD/Principal periodically while the classes are in progress.
- ✓ **Training of New Faculty:** New faculty members are provided opportunity to attend the classes of experienced faculty in order to develop competency in teaching process.
- ✓ **IQAC:** IQAC closely monitors and evaluate the quality of teaching- learning processes in the college.
- ✓ **CCD Monitoring of the Classes:** The college one of the beginners in using high technology to maintain discipline as well as ensure the regular classes to the students through the closed circuit Cameras.
- ✓ **Students Opinion through Suggestion Box:** Students who hesitate to open-up in other forums can make use of the suggestion box inter alia the quality of teaching of the various subjects.

6. Conclusion

It is observed that the group is making all efforts to gain student commitment and engagement .A model has been arrived at by developing a relationship between faculty student and top management .Student engagement activities are initiated from

the time students take admission to the college till the time they exit from the campus .It is also found that there is a positive reinforcement and students are involved in the day to day activities by committing themselves.

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