



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347 -6435 (Online)), Volume 15, Issue 5, May 2026)

Perceived Employability of Undergraduates: A Study

Dr. Manuj Kumar Chutia

Associate Professor, Department of Education, Nowgong Girls' College, Nagaon, Assam, India
e-mail: manojchutia@gmail.com

Abstract— Getting employment is a cherished dream of every individual. Keeping this dream in mind every person including students paving their walks for a better and secured economic life. Our education system producing thousands of educated youths every year, but all don't get employment opportunities. Many times it has been heard that our students are not at all employable which makes unemployment issue more pertinent in our country. This is because of lacking awareness of our students about basic employment skills that are required in any employment field. Quality academic achievement in general and basic employment skills in particular are the key requirements for getting employment. Similarly better employability perception of students is also equally important for employment opportunities. The absence of industry and academia linkages results un-exploration of employment demands at various workforce establishments. This paper is a humble attempt to explore the employability perception of undergraduates in Nagaon district.

Keywords— *Employability, Enrolment, Gender, Higher education, Labour force participation, Undergraduates*

I. INTRODUCTION

Every person has a dream to get a descent earning way for a better and secured economic life in future. Providing employment opportunities to all persons is not an easy task for any country of the world. This problem is more significant in developing countries than others. In 1950, it has been considered as a pertinent issue in India. In the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), employment was considered as the hub of development strategy. In the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), employment was identified and recognized as one of the three important dimensions of state policy with others being quality of life and regional balances (Sushmita, 2016). In the eleventh five year plan importance was paid on inclusive growth and conceived employment. Thus, unemployment issue has been given highest importance in India since independence.

The world population is gradually increasing day by day. India is a country having huge population in numbers and stood second at present among all nations of the world and will occupy the top position in near future.

The increasing trend of population in our country is continuing over the decades, but the working opportunities are not equally increasing. As a matter of fact a large number of capable young workforce remain workless that lead to a great threat to the nation as well.

The ideal notion of education is an all round development of personality. Economic productivity or self sufficiency is one of the most important aspects of modern education. Preparing good human beings in one hand and economically self reliant on the other are two most important aims of modern education. Literally, economic self sufficiency means making individuals capable of arranging their own basic necessities for descent living. For this purpose our education has to design in such a way that it can prepare children to earn in future. If education does not enable us to provide basic necessities of life, all other ideals of education are useless (Taneja, 2004). But our present system of education fails to serve this aim as a whole which leads to unemployment. Now it becomes a major threat to almost all nations of the world which creates social, behavioural and disciplinary problems in the human society. The frustrating scenario of unemployment in the present society among educated youths brings lot of threatening to the unity and integrity to a nation as well as to the mankind. This unemployment may be either lack of employment opportunities in one hand or lacking employability skills among the future labour force on the other.

II. LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA:

India is a developing country and has a fast developing economy among the nations of the world. The Indian economy is the eleventh largest in the world by nominal GDP and the third largest by purchasing power parity (Srivastava & Khare, 2012). Our economy is growing so faster that it is now emerging as one among the top industrial countries of the world (Somalingam & Shanthakumari, 2013). Being a highly populous country it has a large market as well and therefore, every nation is looking at our country. Among the total population, 18.1% belongs to 15 to 24 years of age which is appropriate for



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347 -6435 (Online)), Volume 15, Issue 5, May 2026)

higher education. Among the students enrolled in higher education in the academic year 2019-20 in India majority of them had been enrolled for a variety of courses at the under-graduate level. The students at this level constitute 79.53% of the total number of students in colleges and universities put together (UGC Annual Report 2020-21). This number of future workforce is growing year by year in the country.

The demographic pattern of India is a matter of concern for the world nations. India has huge number of young population for which the whole world is turning their heads towards India. Observing this huge young work force International Labour Organisation (ILO) predicted that the age bracket of 116 million workers would be of 20-24 years and their average age would be of 29 years by the end of 2020, which would be the greatest workforce for the entire world. To take the advantage of demographic dividend this massive workforce would need to be gainfully employed. This means that our country must have the foresight to create systems and capacities to educate and make such large number of people skillful. Emphasis will also have to be laid on giving an education that supports and promotes employment generation, entrepreneurial spirit and innovation as these are the factors that will help in creating enough sustainable job opportunities in India (RUSA, 2013).

Preparing the young workforce for different works of various establishments is a very sensitive issue. Proper education, well designed curriculum and adequate training must be provided to this huge workforce. Thus the higher education policy of India is projected to empower the manpower system of the country to gain competitive advantage in the global market (Somalingam & Shanthakumari, 2013). Therefore, higher education is also gradually extending among the youths because most of the students used to perceive that higher education is a stepping stone for their good employment. Keeping this view in mind we need to design our higher education system in such a way that not only it prepares our students as good human beings but also make them employment fit for different organizations, establishments according to their demands.

In-spite of having huge future workforce, a small portion of this getting employed and large remaining is unemployed. While considering the unemployment of educated youths, the question of employability skill is arising as more pertinent.

III. EMPLOYABILITY PERCEPTION

Employability is the capacity of individuals of getting employment. Gazier (1998), of the opinion that the term employability was based on the dichotomy between “employable” individuals (capable and willing and/or needing to work) versus “unemployable” individuals (unable to work and who needed help) which was first used at the beginning of the twentieth century (Guilbert and others, 2015). Similarly employability is the totality of skills and personal attributes which are helpful for getting employment. This is a technical term which is interpreted differently by different scholars at different occasions. *Knight and Yorke* explained employability from educational point of view which relates to graduate being able to cope with graduate jobs or it relates to their ability to get any sort of job (Naachimuthu, 2007). Yorke explains employability as ‘a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy’ (Weligamage, 2009).

Employability can also be explained on the basis of changing socio-economic and work conditions. In order to fulfill this demand, education and training can play a very vital role which can prepare individuals for changing conditions and demanding working world. It improves one’s productive ability and earning prospects. So according to demand of time and situation education and training should also be changed to enhance the employability of individuals.

India is an emerging nation in the global marketing system and its economy is now transformed to industrialized nature. But this identity is not fully realized due to the dearth of skilled labour in the field. In-spite of having great talent to cope up the needs of skilled labour force in the global market, it still remains far away from the target. One of the main reasons behind this is the absent of industry academia understanding and lacking of awareness about employability skills which are required for global workforce. Our system of education and curriculum is not adequately interconnected with the requirements of industries. New Education Policy, 2020 envisages active internships of students of all higher education institutions with local industry, businesses, artists, crafts persons, villages and local communities, etc., as well as research internships with faculty and researchers for attaining practical knowledge as part of holistic education and improvement of students’ employability. So, higher education institutions should initiate increase of



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology

Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347 -6435 (Online)), Volume 15, Issue 5, May 2026)

employability potential of higher education programmes with utmost responsibility (NPE, 2020).

Moreover the employability perception of students also plays a very significant role in making them employment fit. Improper employability perception negatively affects the behaviour of students. On this context it is revealed that there is significant difference between the perception of students and their employers and this disparity makes the students unemployable (Chithra, 2013).

IV. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Overall employment generation in Assam is very low. Every year thousands of educated youths in different levels are coming out from various educational institutions and this number is growing every year but employment generation is not increasing accordingly. Many times it has been reported that our educated youths, though highly qualified or having high academic qualification are not capable of doing works in different commercial establishments. As a matter of fact those educated youths remain unemployed. The industry-academia interlinks and employer-students interactions are very essential for enhancing employment generation which is sharply lacking at this moment. For strengthening of industry academia linkages and employer student interactions in various forms— formal, informal, long duration, short duration, on campus, field based are imperative for graduates' sustainable skill development (Khare, 2022). Our education system in general and curriculum in particular is not designed according to the demands of present employment market. Therefore, in-spite of being well educated, our youths are not fit for getting a job in different employment fields. Many employers at different times claimed that our students are not fit for selling themselves in the competitive market of workforce. Moreover, the proper perception of students about employability is very important to make them employable. Looking at the large number of unemployed educated youths, the present study is undertaken to investigate whether our undergraduates have proper perception about employability or not.

V. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the present study is 'Perceived Employability of Undergraduates: A Study.' Here, employability implies the totality of basic skills, understandings and personal attributes that are required for getting employment in any work field and undergraduates

are those who are pursuing their bachelor degree in different streams in different degree colleges. This study is confined to the provincialised colleges located in Nagaon district of Assam only.

Assam is situated in the North Eastern part of the country. It is located in 24⁰10'N to 27⁰58'N latitude and 89⁰49'E to 97⁰26'E longitude. Area wise Assam is the second largest state of the region after Arunachal Pradesh. As per 2011 census report, the population of Assam is 3,12,05,576 with a sex ratio of 958 women per thousand men. It shelters about 2.58% of India's total population (Assam Year Book, 2021). So far the literacy is concerned, 72.19% in total literacy have been found with a male literacy of 77.85% comparing to 63% female literacy. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education in Assam is 17.3% in total with male GER is 17.4% comparing to 17.2% females which is quite low in comparison to national average, 27.1% (UGC Annual Report, 2020-21). At present Assam has 26 Universities of all categories, of which 2 central Universities, 17 State Public Universities, 6 Private Universities and 1 deemed to be university. So far the number of colleges is concerned; it has 584 colleges altogether with enrolment of 6,50,601 students in the academic session 2019-20 (UGC Annual Report, 2020-21).

The district of Nagaon is located in the middle part of Assam with latitude of 26.29997⁰E and a longitude of 92.6984⁰E. Nagaon is the homeland of 28,23,768 population which is the highest among all districts of the state with a literacy rate of 72.37% in total as per 2011 census report. At present it has a newly established private university and 16 provincialised degree colleges which offer post graduate and undergraduate courses to thousands of promising young students every year. Being a top populous district in the state, a good number of students are pursuing higher education in the area, for which this district has been selected for the present study.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were as follows-

- i) Assuming very high perception on employability this study tried to investigate the level of perceived employability of undergraduates of Nagaon district.
- ii) Assuming no significant difference in employability perception on the basis of locality this study tried to compare perceived employability of urban and rural undergraduates of Nagaon district.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology

Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347 -6435 (Online)), Volume 15, Issue 5, May 2026)

- iii) Assuming no gender difference on perceived employability among undergraduates this study intended to compare employability perception in terms of
- Value of pursuing course (V)
 - Insecurity and Stress (I)
 - Skills and Knowledge (S)

VII. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The following studies have been reviewed while conducting this study-

For success in any employment field many skills are considered as essential. Communication skills, coping to change with changing environment, decision-making skills, motivation, stress-management skills, time management skills, computer programming skills, leadership skills, problem solving skills and IT skills are some of the worth mentioning key skills for making profession more enjoyable. Male and female students are equally skillful in most of the key skills that required in professional field except in leadership and problem solving skills (Chadha & Sachdev, 2019). While considering the core skills and competencies in professions, males show higher level of core competencies than females and they are more likely to choose self employment than others (Theresia and Fulgence, 2020).

In every year thousands of students are passing out from various higher educational institutions with different degrees. They are coming out without having assurance of getting employment in any sector. It is very unfortunate that students while studying undergraduate courses do not get opportunities to learn different basic skills that are required for getting employment. At the same time, we must consider the perception of employer on our undergraduate students and related courses. Our courses must fulfill the needs of employer by including certain essential skills that required for getting employment in different employment sectors. Difference in perception of employer and students on employability skills reduces employment opportunities in various working sectors. Different studies show that there is big gap between the perception of employers and new graduates on the main employability skills that required by industry. So, collaborations among various stakeholders, higher learning institutions, employer, and government are a dire necessity to inculcate employability skills among graduates (Tanius, 2018). From time to time and place to place skills definitions, employer expectations and requirements change invariably. There is relationship between

employers' needs and learners' skills enhancement capabilities. So, universities should identify skill sets that will best serve the future labour market and align programmes to meet those needs (Weligamage, 2009).

Equal pay for equal work is another important dimension of enhancing employment generation. In many institutions males are preferred than females and sometimes more salary has been given to male employees than their female counterparts which is not fair. Gender should not be considered as important factor for offering salary by any employment sector as it hampers employment generation. Thus in some areas, earning gaps has been seen between male and female counterparts. It is happened in case of normal graduates in general and technical graduates in particular. In case of women engineering graduates, men have got more job offers and earnings of women are about 54 per cent less than that of men and no significant difference noticed in the employment of students by their branch of study i.e. traditional and IT related (Choudhury, 2015).

Education and industry are not isolated entities. Industries provide job opportunities and education prepares individuals for those jobs. There must be relationship between education and industries. Therefore, it has been realized that there must be strong need for developing awareness among students to know the employability skills required by the global talent market. Students with work experience have better awareness of the employability skills than the students with no work experience. In order to develop employability awareness, regular curriculum revision and industry- academia bond are very essential for enhancing employability skills among students (Chitra, 2013).

VIII. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

A total of 200 undergraduate students from degree courses were selected randomly from fifteen provincialised colleges of Nagaon district, Assam among which 100 girls and remaining 100 boys. Of them 93 students belong to urban locality where as 107 from rural locality.

IX. RESEARCH TOOL USED

The research tool used in this study is Perceived Employability Scale (PES). The Scale was designed by K. P. Naachimuthu of Sona School of management, Salem. The scale consists of three dimensions i.e. value of pursuing course, insecurity and stress and skills and knowledge. The value of pursuing course (P) segment has

13 items, insecurity and stress has (I) 14 items and skills and knowledge (S) segment has 12 items. The original scale consisted of 40 items which was given to experts for reviews and finally the items reduced to 39 on the basis of reviews received from experts. Each item consists of five alternatives i.e. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The tool is a five point Likert type scale where scoring procedure for each item is 5 for SA, 4 for A, 3 for U, 2 for D and 1 for SD. So far the validity is concerned, the scale has face validity. The scale was tested for test retest reliability as well as split half reliability. The split half reliability and the test retest reliability were found was found 0.90 and 0.74 respectively which were quite satisfactory. This scale was selected for the present study because of its high reliability and validity which can serve the purposes of the study. Moreover, the length of the scale is also considered as adequate for this study as it is neither too long nor too short. The scale was procured from the National Psychological Corporation, Agra.

X. DATA COLLECTION

Descriptive survey method was applied to collect data for this study. The investigator personally approached the sampled students to fill up the scale as per the guidelines given with.

XI. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED:

Collected data were analyzed by applying descriptive as well as inferential statistics. Statistical techniques like percentage, Mean (M), Standard deviation (σ) and 't' tests were applied to analyze data.

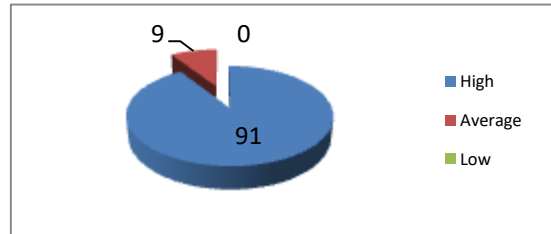
XII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of the present study are analyzed and articulated in the following tables and figure.

TABLE I
 LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY PERCEPTION OF UNDERGRADUATES

Percentage of Level of employability perception of undergraduates			
Level	High	Average	Low
%	91	9	0

FIGURE:1
 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY PERCEPTION OF UNDERGRADUATES-



From the above table and figure it has been observed that majority of undergraduates in general have high perception on employability. Altogether 91% have shown high perception and 9% undergraduates have shown average perception on employability. Not a single undergraduate has exposed low perception on employability. Though it was presumed that our undergraduates are not at all aware and well oriented about basic necessary skills for employment, this study diverges that conjecture. Thus, it is revealed from the above that undergraduates are very aware about their basic employability skills.

TABLE II
 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE ON EMPLOYABILITY PERCEPTION BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL UNDERGRADUATES -

Locality	N	M	' σ '	df	't'	Sig. (2-tailed)
Urban	93	143.34	12.60	198	0.51	NS
Rural	107	144.19	10.56			

Significant level is at $P < 0.05$

Table 2 reveals the mean scores and 't' values of employability perception of undergraduates based on their locality i.e. urban and rural. The mean employability perception of urban undergraduates is found 143.34 which are slightly lower than the mean employability perception of rural undergraduates (144.19). It is apparent from the results that there is no significant difference ($t = 0.51 < 0.05$) in perceived employability of undergraduates based on their locality at 5% level of significance. Therefore, it can be said that rural and urban undergraduates have similar kind of perception towards employability and locality does not play any significant role in developing awareness about employability skills among undergraduates.

TABLE III
 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE ON EMPLOYABILITY PERCEPTION BETWEEN
 BOYS AND GIRLS -

Gender	N	M	'σ'	df	't'	Sig. (2-tailed)
Boys	100	145.2	12.95	198	0.97	NS
Girls	100	143.1	8.18			

Significant level is at $P < 0.05$

The 't' value while comparing the significance of difference of employability perception between undergraduate boys and girls is found 0.97 ($t = 0.97 < 0.05$), which is lower than the table value at 5% level of significance and therefore, cannot reject the null hypothesis. It indicates that there is no significant difference in perception of employability between undergraduate boys and girls. Though boys are preferred in some certain establishments than girls, they show similar kind of perception in basic skills of employability. This study proved that gender doesn't have any role in developing employability perception among undergraduates. Therefore, it can be said that undergraduate boys and girls are not different in their employability perception rather they have similar perception and hence equally employable.

TABLE: IV
 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF EMPLOYABILITY
 PERCEPTION BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS

Aspects	Boys N=100		Girls N=100		't' value
	M	SD	M	SD	
V	50.02	6.90	50.54	4.85	0.44 NS
I	53.06	6.54	50.48	6.08	2.05 S
S	41.78	5.51	39.92	6.0	1.62 NS

Significant level is at $P < 0.05$

From the table above it has been revealed that the 't' value is not significant on the aspect of value of pursuing course (V) between undergraduate boys and girls. So, null hypothesis cannot be rejected at 5% level of significance. Therefore, regarding value of pursuing the course, boys and girls have similar perception. On the other hand while comparing the 't' value of undergraduate boys and girls on insecurity and stress (I) aspect found to be

significant at 5% level of significance, hence reject the null hypothesis. Thus it can be revealed that there is difference in perception between undergraduate boys and girls on this aspect. In case of skills and knowledge (S) aspect on the other, the 't' value is not significant at 5% level of significance and thus it can be said that there is no difference on perception of undergraduate boys and girls on skills and knowledge aspect of employability.

XIII. MAJOR FINDINGS:

After systematic analysis of collected data it has been observed that majority of undergraduate students have high level of employability perception irrespective of their gender and locality. The mean employability perception of undergraduate boys is found higher than girls. While investigating locality wise employability perception of undergraduates, it is observed that rural undergraduates show better performance than urban undergraduates. The mean value on employability perception of rural students is a bit higher than urban students. While investigating locality and gender wise significance of difference on employability perception, it is found that there is no significant mean difference on employability perception between rural and urban undergraduates as well as boys and girls. It implies that locality and gender has no influence on undergraduates in case of developing employability perception. In case of investigating significance of difference on value of pursuing course and skills and knowledge aspects, no significant difference has been observed between boys and girls. On the other hand, while investigating significance of difference on the segment of insecurity and stress of employability, significant difference has been found between undergraduate boys and girls.

XIV. SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

Apart from general courses, vocational courses are very essential for every student. So, while designing the course, more job oriented courses should be introduced with the general education programme side by side. Industry and academia are not isolated aspects; rather they are interlinked to each other. Therefore proper policy should be adopted to interlink courses with demands of employment fields so that students can fulfill their career goals. It should be done for preparing our potential students with key employment skills to make them more employable. In order to do that, different modes of interactions between students and employer must be done



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology

Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347 -6435 (Online)), Volume 15, Issue 5, May 2026)

along with strengthening industry academia linkages. At the time of designing a course, attention should also be paid to develop self confidence to our potentially capable young undergraduates. Skill based education, career oriented courses should be built-in the general curriculum at higher level of education. Planning should be made to provide regular career and vocational counseling to our potentially capable students. Attention should also be paid to prepare our students for facing campus interviews as well as other such job interviews held by various commercial establishments with courage and confidence.

XV. CONCLUSION

Employment is one of the most important aspects of human life. Everybody wants to be a productive member of the society and therefore trying to make one self fit for various employment sectors. Looking at the growing demands of capable and promising workforce for various establishments it is very essential to make our future workforce fit for getting employment. Only a well designed education system can fulfill this goal in a productive way. Therefore, it is the utmost necessity to design our modern education system by transforming our curriculum with more diversification so that it can prepare our young generations as good human beings in general and prolific members in particular by making them employable. So, along with other capabilities and knowledge about basic employment skills proper perception about employability is a must to enhance the employment generation among educated youths.

References

- [1] Agarwal, A., Agarwal, P.K. & Rastogi, R. K. 2018. Challenges and Issues in employment and unemployment scenario in India. *ResearchGate*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343690993>
- [2] Bansal, A. 2018. A study on employability skills of MBA students: Employers and Students perspective. *Gurukul Business Review (GBR)*, Vol. 14. 47-51
- [3] Barua, S. K. 2021. Assam year book, 2021. Guwahati: Jyoti Prakashan
- [4] Biswas, S. 2016. Unemployment of India. Proceedings of National Conference on recent innovations in Science, Engineering & Technology.
- [5] Chadha, V. & Sachdeva, H. 2019. Students' Perceptions of Employability: A Gender Perspective, *Indian Journal of Economics and Research*. Vol. 8 (1).
- [6] Chithra, R. 2013. Employability Skills -A Study on the Perception of the Engineering Students and their Prospective Employers. *Global Journal of Management and Business Studies*. Vol. 3 (5): 25-34.
- [7] Richakumari & N. Parveen. 2020. Unemployment a big issue in India. *Edutracks*. Vol. 20 (1): 19-21
- [8] Somalingam, A. & Shantakumari, R. 2013. Testing and exploring graduate employability skills and competencies. *International Journal of Advancement in Education and Social Sciences*. Vol. 1 (2): 36-46
- [9] Srivastava, A. & Khare, M. 2012. Skills for employability: South Asia. New Delhi: National University of Educational Planning and Administration. p.4
- [10] Taneja, V. R. 2004. *Educational Thought and Practice*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers private limited.p.27
- [11] Theresia, Dominic & Katherine, Fulgence. 2020. Gender Differences in Enhancing Students' Employability Skills. *ResearchGate*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342591518>
- [12] Weligamage, S. S. 2009. Graduates Employability Skills: Evidence from literature review. *ASAIHL*. p.115
- [13] Annual Report. 2013-14. University Grants Commission. New Delhi. p.66
- [14] Annual Report. 2020-21. University Grants Commission, Government of India
- [15] Indian Labour Market Report 2008
- [16] Annual Report. 2020-21. Ministry of Labour & Employment. Government of India
- [17] National Education Policy, 2020. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Government of India
- [18] Rastriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA): National Higher Education Mission. 2013. Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Government of India. 9-10
