

Why Intern?

**Advantages and Challenges of Internships for Adolescents:
A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective**



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ABBREVIATIONS

NEP	National Education Policy
EQUIP	Education Quality Upgradation And Inclusion Program
AICTE	All India Council For Technical Education
UGC	University Grants Commission
NAAC	National Assessment And Accreditation Council
HEI	Higher Educational Institutions
NCS	National Career Service
STWT	School To Work Transition
ToT	Training Of Trainers
PLFS	Periodic Labour Force Survey
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
EE	Experiential Education
OECD	Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NACE	National Association Of Colleges And Employers
EC	European Commission
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
NAPS	National Apprenticeship Promotion scheme
NATS	National Apprenticeship Training scheme
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
DGT	Directorate General of Training
MoE	Ministry of Education
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
SHREYAS	Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises,
ITI	Industrial Training Institute
MSDE	Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
NPSDE	National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
STT	Short Term Training
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
PMKVY	Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
BPL	Below Poverty Line
PMKK	Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra



DDUGKY	Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development
PMMY	Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana
PMRKY	Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MMSME	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MNREGA	The Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PMEGP	Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme
WBL	Work Based Learning
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
AQSA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BVoc	Bachelor of Vocation
NBA	National Board of Accreditation
NOS	National Occupation Standards
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
D.Ed	Diploma of Education
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
M.Ed	Master of Education
TULIP	The Urban Learning Internship Program
MoSPI	Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation
BMM	Bachelor of Mass Media
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
SCF	State Curriculum Framework
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
TSU	Technical Support Unit
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research & Training
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a path-breaking move, the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, has set the tone for complete overhaul of India's education landscape. The policy seeks to transform the education system through a multitude of changes such as introduction of multidisciplinary approach to learning, vesting of flexible educational pathways thorough introduction of multiple entry-exit points in the educational trajectory to suit learner needs, emphasis on pedagogy that promotes experiential learning, creativity and critical thinking, mainstreaming of vocational education in a phased manner amongst other equally progressive measures.

The policy also fully recognises the crucial role that education has to play in preparing youth for transitioning into careers and accordingly emphasises the need for integrating career counselling as well as internship opportunities within the ambit of the educational system itself, so that students can actively engage with the practical side of their learning and thereby improve their employability.

Research studies conducted world-wide on measuring the benefits



of internship show that internships play a vital role in shaping the education to employment journey of youth. Internships not only vest youth with crucial employability skills but also aid in career exploration and consideration of a broader array of occupations. Internships help reduce the duration of job search and improve employment prospects. Internships particularly serve as a critical tool to bridge the opportunity gap for the underserved youth by giving them a chance to experience professional life settings, gain practical work skills as well as build professional networks which aid in career progression. This fact assumes critical importance as youth from marginalized backgrounds are most often first-generation learners and do not have access to appropriate career guidance or professional networks and work settings.



WHY INTERN?

Advantages and Challenges of Internships for Adolescents: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

Despite the recognition of the critical role that internships have to play in guiding a youth's educational and professional journey, internships as a concept have to still gain traction in India. If we examine the education to work continuum in the Indian context, it is clear that action has been initiated on many fronts to bridge the transition gap between education and employment. However, bulk of these efforts have been focused on developing technical/vocational skills through stress on long- and short-term skilling initiatives and apprenticeship programs as well as facilitating job linkages through creation of employment marketplaces such as the National Career Services platform. Currently, there is still a gap left both in terms of adequate implementation of career guidance solutions in the prevailing education system as well as lack of emphasis on internship as an initiative to aid education to work transition.

The urban poor is a paradox - while physical access to education and employment is not an issue, socio-economic hierarchies present deny them quality education and decent wage career opportunities that promise social and economic mobility.

Given the critical influence that internships have on shaping the professional journey of a youth, in this

study we have particularly focussed on understanding the status of internship uptake in India, the utility of internships as perceived by different stakeholders, factors which have impeded uptake of internships and possible solutions to remedy this situation. For this purpose, we have reached out to different stakeholders such as youth, educationists and corporates who together constitute the internship ecosystem to understand their views on all the aforementioned issues. It is heartening to note that all these stakeholders have completely endorsed the fact that internships have benefitted them in achieving their individual objectives. Close to 40% of youth who participated in a survey conducted by Antarang Foundation have affirmed that internships have helped them in securing a career. Our interactions with corporates have made us understand that interns have helped them achieve scale of operations and last mile connectivity as well as served as a potential source of hiring the best fit talent. Educationists have also affirmed the benefits of internships in terms of its ability to expose their students to professional work-life settings as also exert a positive influence on their students' ability to secure career connections.

However, despite the many benefits observed by different stakeholders, students simply don't seem to want to



intern. On trying to gauge the underlying factors for this situation through the study of secondary data on internship uptake in our country coupled with qualitative interactions with various stakeholders who constitute the internship ecosystem, as well as our own experience in offering internship connects to students of our employability skills program, we see that the key impediments hampering the uptake of internships include:

- *Low level of awareness amongst the student population in general about the utility of internships*
- *Limited uptake of internships in educational streams where internships are not mandated by the curriculum*
- *Limited availability of internship opportunities coupled with the fact that the internship market lacks depth in its ability to cater to gamut of career aspirations of youth*
- *Corporate wariness about hiring interns on account of the skill gap perceived by them in the youth passing out of Higher Educational Institutions, and their apparent reluctance to invest in training programs to mitigate this gap*
- *Lack of support and involvement of educational institutions when it comes to educational streams which do not mandate internships as part of the educational curriculum*

- *Fear of academic failure amongst first generation learners, where internships are seen as a distraction.*

Considering the breadth of the problem at hand, and also the fact that services such as career counselling, core employability skills training, provision of internship opportunities, post placement support etc. are all equally relevant for aiding the education to employment transition of a youth, there is a need to arrive at a composite solution which can address youth employability needs in a holistic manner. Further, action will need to be initiated in a manner such that a systemic change becomes possible and the resultant solution becomes accessible to every youth in the country.

In a large way, the broad contours of this solution have already been outlined out by the Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion program (EQUIP, 2019-2024) document which lays down a five-year vision plan for comprehensive re-hauling of India's higher education system as well as making it more relevant by improving the employability of the students passing out of higher education. The strategy proposed by us tries to build upon the EQUIP vision and attempts to suggest practical pathways for actualizing the same.



Accordingly, we propose a two-pronged strategy to address the problem:

i) Activities recommended at the Central Government level: *Activities at the Central level can essentially be focussed on providing policy direction with the objective of laying out the broad outline of the proposed solution.*

Specifically, we recommend:

- Mandating internships across all educational streams. This is in line with the Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion program (EQUIP, 2019-2024) vision which talks of mandatory internships across all undergraduate programs.

- Consideration of curriculum level changes to embed internships. This would involve suitable changes in the National Curriculum Framework followed by corresponding changes at State level. Also considering that internships would be most effective when they are preceded by career counselling and core employability skills training, curriculum framework needs to factor in provision of these two activities within the ambit of education system.

- Guidelines could be framed to provide for implementation of internships at Higher Secondary level (XI-XII) on similar lines as the

guidelines framed by Higher Education regulatory bodies such as AICTE/UGC

- Consideration of realignment of assessment norms (NAAC) of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) so as to place higher weightages to their role in assisting student progression through education and student mentoring. Presently these functions have limited role to play in deciding overall assessment scores of HEIs, and considering the crucial role that HEIs need to play in assisting student transition into employment, there needs to be sufficient recognition of this function.
- Mandating internship offerings by corporates on the same lines as apprenticeships. Alternately internships may be interchangeably considered for implementation by corporates in lieu of apprenticeships.
- Permitting expenditure incurred by corporates on training and stipend of interns as part of Corporate Social Responsibility expense on similar lines as expenditure incurred on apprenticeship programs
- Folding in recommendations to industry on executing internship arrangements within the ambit of The Apprenticeship Act, 1961 itself. These directives could cover recommendations on co-designing



including monitoring the internship arrangements along with the educational institutions on similar lines as the AICTE and UGC guidelines on implementation of internship. This could help in enlisting a stronger role of corporates in execution of the internship programs.

● **Development of an integrated portal to service youth's employability needs:** In order to service young people's career needs across the lifecycle and to ensure seamless transition from education to employment, the NCS platform could be modified to offer certain additional functionalities. Some of these features could include a psychometric testing and career guidance component, a matching engine which could map the candidates' aspirations and skills to suggest suitable internship opportunities and post-placement support in form of mentor connects. Creation of a national internship portal draws parallel with the EQUIP vision for creation of a national internship platform.

2) Activities recommended at the State Government level:

Considering that Education is a concurrent subject, *States have an extremely crucial role to play in actual execution of the NEP vision and helping embed internships within the education system.*



In fact, it is the States that can ensure last mile connectivity and ensure equitable distribution of services to support the education to employment transition of youth.

Keeping in mind the need to ensure scalability, inclusivity and replicability, the proposed structure that could be set up at State level is envisaged as a School to Work Transition (STWT) intervention with a Hub and Spoke design.

The proposed initiative is expected to be anchored by individual State Governments, who will then take up the responsibility to institute Hubs within every Education Cluster as envisioned by the NEP. The secondary schools and colleges would operate as the Spokes of the model, delivering an integrated employability skills curriculum to their students and enabling internship connects through the Hub.



Some of the key features of the proposed Hub and Spoke model are elucidated below:

- The School to Work Transition (STWT) Hub and Spoke structure has been envisioned as a one stop shop providing holistic solutions to meet youth's employability needs.
- The Hub team is envisioned to be carved out of the Government machinery with the staffing as envisaged by the NEP cluster recommendations. The staff could comprise one-two counsellors and a coordinator to source and aggregate internship and career exposure opportunities
- The STWT Hub would be tasked with onboarding stakeholders such as internship providers and educational institutions by running large scale marketing and outreach campaigns to create awareness of its services.
- The Hub is expected to a) act as a central repository of knowledge and services b) build capacities of the educational institutions for conducting career counselling and employability skills training through the ToT (Training of Trainer) function c) aggregate internships opportunities and organise internship fairs d) organise expert speaker and exposure visit opportunities for the education

institutions who are part of the cluster e) offer post placement support to educational institutions through mentor connects and f) offer placement and post placement support to corporates through student connects and employability skills training services for their recruits respectively. Here, we recommend that the data on internships and career exposure opportunities is updated by the Hubs on the NCS portal itself. This would have a twofold advantage of ensuring local level robustness to the NCS and building familiarity of the NCS with students.

- The Spokes would primarily be responsible for delivering career counselling and an integrated employability skills curriculum to their students and enabling internship connects through the Hub.
- The Hub and Spoke structure draws support from concept of the School Complex/Cluster as envisioned by the NEP well as the concept of a professionally run Centre for Employment & Entrepreneurship as proposed by EQUIP guidelines.

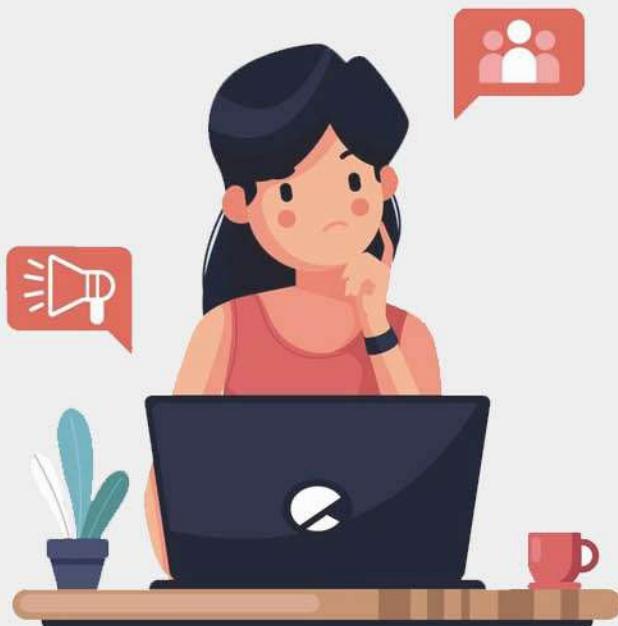


A careful examination of the solution proposed above makes it amply clear that the *intention is neither to duplicate any of the initiatives undertaken either by the Central or State level government schemes, nor to radically overhaul the existing infrastructure created for the purpose of aiding the education to employment transition of youth.*

The proposed solution, basically intends to leverage on the vision and direction laid out by the NEP and EQUIP for transformation of India's education landscape with the intention of making it more relevant to meeting the employability needs of the youth. The recommendations made by us mainly focus on suggesting practical pathways for provision of employability enhancing measures such as internship opportunities for youth while at the same time suggesting avenues for ensuring last mile connectivity and outreach of these initiatives.

The focus so far has been on achieving 100 percent literacy in the country, the narrative now needs to shift to 100% employability. Despite the critical role that internships have to play in improving the employment prospects of youth, they have yet to gain due recognition and acceptance in our country. To remedy this situation a concerted and collaborative effort

will need to be made by all the stakeholders which would involve action by government agencies, educational institutions as well as the industry; only then would we be in a position to tap India's demographic dividend!



BACKGROUND

The Indian education landscape is set to undergo a paradigm shift with the unveiling of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020). The NEP envisages a monumental change in the curriculum and pedagogy, with clear emphasis on opening up of multiple educational pathways for transitioning to a career as well as promotion of experiential and work-oriented learning.



Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school - including subjects in physical education, the arts and crafts, and vocational skills – so that they can design their own paths of study and life plans. *Career guidance has been duly recognized as a step to improve learning experience at schools and thereby contribute towards student retention in education with particular*

emphasis on its relevance for students from socio - economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The NEP also recognises the importance of converting the prevailing education system into more of an experiential journey, preparing our youth for rewarding careers in the future. With this intent in mind, the NEP proposes the provision of internship opportunities to all students between grades 6-12 for actual practical experience and learning work skills. This move is expected to help widen the employment options for students through exposure to various career pathways. Finally, as part of a holistic education, students at all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) are to be provided with opportunities for internships with local industry, businesses, artists/ craft persons, as well as research internships with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability.



Given the emphasis laid by the NEP on the need to introduce a more experiential and practical work-oriented education, with internships being envisaged as a critical pathway to prepare youth for employment; this paper seeks to:

1. Examine the need as well as implementation status of an effective internship ecosystem in the country
2. Capture the benefits and challenges that interns, employers and educators face in implementing internships in the country
3. Offer recommendations for a robust internship ecosystem in the country

More importantly, the paper intends to capture the voices of critical stakeholders in the ecosystem such as the youth, parents, educational institutions as well as corporates who together comprise the internship ecosystem. These stakeholders have been associated with Antarang Foundation through its employability skills program – CareeReady which is offered to youth from underserved communities and low-income colleges. The program imparts

career guidance, builds employability skills and connects students to suitable career linkages in the form of internships, jobs and vocational courses.

Through structured dialogues as well as a youth survey, an attempt has been made to understand views of various stakeholders on the utility of internships, the challenges faced by them in executing internships as well as possible solutions to overcome these challenges.

The voice of youth assumes critical importance in the backdrop of high youth unemployment levels prevalent in India (19.2% for youth aged 15-29 years, PLFS, 2019); especially considering the fact that youth have reported positive correlation between internships and its ability to vest them not only with necessary employability skills but more importantly translate into job connects. Interestingly, our interactions with corporates have also helped us understand that internships also serve corporate interests by vesting them with opportunities to locate and hire the right talent, scale businesses and improve product/service outreach, thus creating a win-win situation.





Review of Literature - Role of internships as a mode of experiential learning and a tool to bridge education to work transition

According to David Kolb's experiential learning theory (ELT), learning is defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience". Kolb's research paved the way for the development of pedagogy in higher education that incorporates aspects of experiential education (EE). Some of the benefits of experiential learning opportunities include an

opportunity to experience the real-work world, test drive career choices as well gain networking opportunities. One of the most prominent ways a student can engage in EE in college is through experiences such as cooperative education, internships, service learning, externships(apprenticeship), research, study abroad and fieldwork (Domholt, 2018).

“

...Internships help students gain mostly soft skills and are a tool for career exploration.

-(OECD, 2020a)

”

According to OECD, school-mediated **work-based learning** within the context of general upper secondary education programmes, **can** typically **take the form of internships, work placements etc. Such programs can** enable students to learn about work and motivate them to engage more seriously in classroom study, **helping them connect what is taught at school to real work contexts. They help students gain mostly soft skills and are a tool for career exploration** (OECD, 2020a).



Evolution of internships

Experts agree that in the largest sense, internships descend from the professional apprenticeships that originated with the trade guilds of Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries. Master craftsmen and tradesmen took in young learners and gave them menial tasks that make filing and photocopying look plush. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution that the apprenticeship system died out, albeit briefly. Vocational training replaced it, which equipped workers with the skills needed for factory work in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Internships as we know them today – students working at jobs to gain hands-on experience in the world of work – evolved over the course of the 20th century as other fields incorporated supervised, practical experience into educational curriculums. The term “intern” was first applied to medical students in the 1920s. Government and business eventually adopted the term and internship and co-op programs began to be offered on college campuses in the 1960s (Taylor Research Group, 2014).

What is an internship?

While there is no agreed international definition of what constitutes an internship, a reasonable

working description is that internships involve a limited period of work experience with an employer usually lasting between a few weeks to one year (in some rare cases even longer) but which is neither part of a regular employment relationship nor a formal apprenticeship (ILO, 2018a).

According to National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), *“An internship is a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learnt in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. Internships give students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths; and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent.”* (NACE, 2018). To ensure that an experience—whether it is a traditional internship or one conducted remotely or virtually—is educational, and thus eligible to be considered a legitimate internship by the NACE² definition, all the following criteria must be met:

²[Established in 1956, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is a professional association in the USA that connects over 9,900 college career services professionals; over 3,200 university relations and recruiting professionals; and over 300 business solution providers].



“

Internships are structured, short-term, supervised placements often focused around particular tasks or projects with defined timescales.

-(AICTE policy)

”

- The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom. It must not be simply to advance the operations of the employer or be the work that a regular employee would routinely perform.
- The skills or knowledge learned must be transferable to other employment settings.
- The experience has a defined beginning and end, and a job description with desired qualifications.
- There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student's academic coursework.
- There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.
- There is routine feedback by the

experienced supervisor.

- There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.

According to AICTE “*Internships are educational and career development opportunities, providing practical experience in a field or discipline.* They are structured, short-term, supervised placements often focused around particular tasks or projects with defined timescales. An internship may be compensated or non-compensated. The internship has to be meaningful and mutually beneficial to the intern and the organization. It is important that the objectives and the activities of the internship program are clearly defined and understood” (AICTE policy).

A review of the above definitions clearly highlights the fact that, conceptually, internships are expected to be structured short term work experiences with clearly defined objectives and timelines. Internships are meant to provide a flavour of real-life job exposure and contribute to the career development of the interns through applied experiences and professional connections.



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How does internship differ from apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship programs differ from internship programs on various counts some of which include the objectives and length of both these programs, applicability of regulations to both these modes of work-based learning, nature of training imparted etc.

Apprenticeship programs are designed to provide a dual mode of learning. Under an apprenticeship program, trainees typically learn the theoretical aspects of a subject in a classroom setting and receive practical training on these subject skills in a workplace environment. Apprenticeship programs thus have a structured curriculum and formal assessment frameworks, with defined stipend pay-outs to apprentices. They are generally for a longer period of time e.g, 2-3 years and act as a valid educational pathway to transition into a career. In India, apprenticeships are provided through two government schemes – NAPS and NATS.

On the other hand, internships, *albeit the conceptual understanding, are generally for all practical purposes*, not accompanied by predefined training curriculum or stipend pay-out requirements. Similarly, not all internships may have the requirement to put in a fixed



number of working hours. Regulations governing the implementation of internship experiences differ country-to-country and in Indian context are also sector dependent, as a result of which there is no uniformity in the design of internship experiences. Internships are undertaken for a relatively short period of time and are primarily meant to offer work life exposure and career development opportunities to interns.

The U.S. Department of Labor (US Labor) has identified the following differences between internships and apprenticeships arrangements:

1) Length of Time: Internships are usually short term (1-3 months) and apprenticeships are longer term (1-3 years).

2) Structure:

a. Apprenticeships include a structured training plan, with a focus on mastering specific skills and



employer needs to fill an occupation within their organization.

b. Internships aren't structured and often focus on entry-level general work experience.

3) **Mentorship:** Apprentices receive individualized training with an experienced mentor who walks them through their entire process. Internships do not always include mentorship.

4) **Pay:** Apprenticeships are paid experiences that often lead to full-time employment. Internships are often unpaid and may not lead to a full-time job.

5) **Credential:** Apprenticeships lead to an industry-recognized credential. Internships typically do not lead to a credential.

employment prospects and higher wages, although the effect tends to disappear some years after graduation.

Robert and Saar (2012) have conducted a comparative research specifically devoted to analysing the effect of work experience on post-graduation occupational outcomes in six Central and Eastern European countries. Their analysis shows that study-related work experience reduces the duration of job search and improves employment prospects.



"I want to become a social entrepreneur and work for the cause of women. An entrepreneur needs to be multi-faceted and possess many skills. I therefore decided that I should do multiple internships where I can learn a variety of different skills which will help me set up my own business. I therefore did internships where I could get an understanding of how to market and sell different types of products/services. I worked in edtech and software companies and learnt social media marketing and digital skills. I learnt how to converse and convince people to see my point of view. I also worked in HR department of a NGO, where I learnt how the entire

Utility of internships

Utility of Internships for Students

A compilation by ILO (ILO, 2018a) of research studies conducted world-wide on measuring the benefits of internship throws up many interesting observations, key of which are quoted below:

Studies by Häkkinen (2006) in Finland and Joensen (2009) in Denmark shows that students with work experience benefit from better subsequent



hiring and human resource engagement process works. The marketing and people skills that I learnt in my internships will surely help me in setting up my business eventually”

*– Krishnapriya,
alumni CareeReady*



Surveys of employers in the United Kingdom provide evidence that work experience during higher education is helpful for securing employment upon graduation (UKCES, 2015).



Antarang conducted a survey amongst its alumni, current students as well as non-Antarang youth from a similar demographic profile. The survey comprised youth of which 80% had either participated or completed Antarang’s CR program, balance 20% had not been exposed to the CR program. The students who had not been exposed to CR program largely hailed from low-income colleges which partner with Antarang for the CR program. As explained earlier, the Antarang CareeReady program vests youth from low-income

colleges which partner with Antarang for the CR program. As explained earlier, the Antarang CareeReady program vests youth from low-income backgrounds with employability skills and offers them suitable career connections. The survey had extremely simple objective questions intended to understand participation levels in internship programs, benefits experienced by students participating in internship programs as well as causes for lack of uptake of internships.

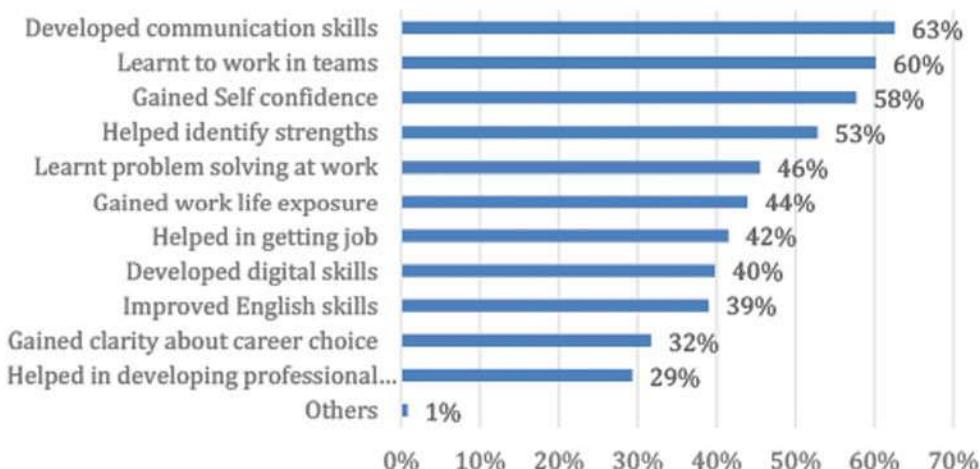
A total of 634 students were surveyed. Nearly all the students were either pursuing college or had completed their college education with majority being in 16-19 years age bracket. Close to 70% of the survey participants comprised female candidates, the same being largely reflective of Antarang’s CR outreach demographics.

Of the total students surveyed, around 20% of the students had opted for internships. When students were asked to state the reason for not taking up internships, around 20% of the students stated that they were not aware of what is internship, another 14% stated they were



not were of the utility of internship while close to 22% stated that they did not know how to find internships

Close to 42% of the students who took up internships reported that internships helped them get a job. A vast majority reported that they developed communication skills, learnt to work in teams and gained self-confidence.



Klein et al. (2014) examine the effect of early work experience upon labour market entry among **German graduates**, concluding that only study-related work experience positively affects labour market outcomes, while non-study-related or mandatory internships have either no or negative effects on job search duration, wages and occupational position.

Nunley et al. (2016, 2017) provide evidence of a **positive effect of internship experience during higher education on reducing underemployment after graduation and increasing employment prospects in the United States**. **Graduates who underwent internship saw the probability of being**



interviewed for a job for which they had applied increase by 14 percentage points, with larger returns for non-business majors and graduates with high academic ability.

“I teach child development related subjects to BA Sociology and BA Psychology students. Students have to do a one-month teaching field work as part of my subject. I have seen that internships help students get job placement and around 40-50% of my students end up getting job offers either during their field work itself or post completion of their course”

*– Asst. Professor
(Home Economics- Child
Development)
MMP Shah College*



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"I think internships help students gain practical work life exposure and teaches them organisational behaviour thereby improving their employment prospects"

– Professor, Kothari College



Saniter & Siedler (2014) while examining the causal effects of student internships at **German** universities on labour market choices and wages later on in life have found that **participation in a student internship programme increased individuals' wages by 6%, five years after graduation** – that is, there is a clear and sustained increase in wages arising from participation in internships. They also found that this increase in wages is largely driven by an increased propensity to work full-time, but also by a lower likelihood of being unemployed during the five years following graduation.

Gault et al. (2000) find that students undertaking internships while

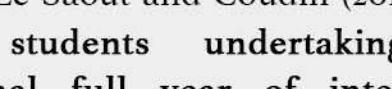


studying at Northeastern University (USA) took less time to find their first job, as well as obtaining increased job satisfaction and wages.



"We have observed that interns benefit tremendously from work exposure because close to 80% of the students who intern with us end up with job offers"

– Kenznow



Le Saout and Coudin (2015) find that students undertaking an optional full year of internship reduces the job search duration when the graduates enter the labour market and it is appreciated by prospective employers as a signal of ability.

The report by the European Commission (EC) on internships (termed traineeships by the EC) based on descriptive analysis of the Eurobarometer data which provides the source data for some of the econometric analysis reported below, finds that internship – in general – has been successful or is perceived to be successful in finding a regular job by the majority of trainees surveyed, especially internships involving work experience in large



companies and which lasts for more than six months.

Employers responding to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) 2016 Internship and Co-op Survey (NACE, 2016) indicated that their primary goal is converting graduates who have participated in internship or co-op programs into full-time employees. The NACE 2021 (NACE, 2021) report on Internship states that conversion rate for interns stood at 66.4% for class of 2020. NACE Student Survey Report , 2017 provides evidence based on descriptive statistics that paid internships lead to significantly better employment outcomes than unpaid internships; the latter being associated with less success in terms of job offers and salary after graduation.

Summarising these findings, ILO in its research paper concludes that:

- 1) *Internship programmes are sometimes – more often than not – associated with an improvement in post-programme employment prospects as broadly understood;*
- 2) *Paid internship programmes are clearly associated with better post-programme outcomes than unpaid ones;*
- 3) *The identification of causal impacts,*

or more generally, causal mechanisms underlying these findings remains less clear since the evidence involving a convincing attribution of causality is rare.

Similar findings have also been quoted in an OECD study on Career aspirations of Youth and the Future of Work (OECD, 2020b).

The paper observes that **studies in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States**, which follow groups of young people from childhood to adulthood, show that teenagers who combine part-time employment with full-time education do better than would be expected in their school-to-work transitions. They highlight a range of positive benefits, including lower likelihoods of being unemployed or NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), higher wages, greater chances of pursuing apprenticeships and greater contentment in their career progression.

The aforesaid paper goes on to suggest that experience of the world of work gives young people the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge in unfamiliar situations. It challenges them to understand what it means to be personally effective (and attractive to employers) in distinct workplaces while providing a unique opportunity to develop social networks of value.





"I come from a family of academics and am currently pursuing my Msc in U.K. I decided to intern with an NGO while pursuing my first-year graduation in Economics and Statistics. During the internship I had to perform tasks and learn skills which had not been taught to me in my college. The internship made me understand that even if I did not have prior knowledge of a task beforehand, I had the ability to explore and learn, and so it vested me with the simple confidence that I could find my way through unchartered territories. This self-confidence is very crucial to a youth who is trying to navigate from his/her educational life to a work life setting. Further, the social skills that I picked up in my internship have proved very crucial in my studies abroad as it has given me the confidence to hold my own in totally foreign settings and people"

*– Sanika,
interned at Antarang*



The study goes on to state that there exists a positive relationship between participation in career development activities and consideration of a broader array of occupations. While the relationship is strongest with *internships*, a number of less time-consuming activities, including job shadowing and attending job fairs, are positively associated with a broader range of aspirations. This assumes critical significance in light of OECD PISA 2018 survey findings, which states that across the 41 countries which participated in the PISA survey, 53% of girls and 47% of boys who expressed an opinion, anticipated entering one of just ten jobs by the age of 30, indicating a high concentration of job preferences and limited awareness of career possibilities³.

³[Independent third-party evaluation of Antarang's CareeReady program has also revealed that career exposure opportunities help in broadening student's career aspirations. Around 30% of the students who were part of the study showed a change in career aspiration by the end of the program, 7% who were not clear about their career choice identified a career goal for themselves. Around 15% of the students became more specific in identifying the nature of work they would like to do although their overall career goal did not change.



“I was unsure about my choice of career. I decided to do internships in various fields to understand which career would be most suited to me. Accordingly, I worked in a real estate consultancy where I had a marketing role, an edtech company where I had to do software testing, a company running a crowd funding platform where I learnt social media marketing and finally an NGO where I worked in the HR department. Through all these internships I learnt that I enjoyed myself best in a HR role and hence I am now planning to make my career in this field. The best thing is that some of my employers in my earlier internships are also helping me connect with job opportunities”

– Vijay,
alumni CareeReady

The paper also goes on to note that longitudinal studies have explored the relationship between teenagers' occupational aspirations and what actually happens to them in the adult labour market, and found youthful career ambitions to have a predictive quality.

Young people who aim high while in school are more likely to end up in managerial or professional jobs requiring university education than would be anticipated given their background and academic performance. The paper also notes that most young people whose aspirations are misaligned with their education are drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Results from OECD PISA studies show that the career aspirations of young people are no simple reflection of teenage academic ability. Rather, they reflect complex lives. Analyses show that even after controlling for proficiency levels, the children of more advantaged families are more likely to want to go on to university than working class kids.



Across the countries that took part in OECD PISA 2018 survey, high-performing students from the most advantaged backgrounds were more than twice as likely as their disadvantaged peers of equal academic ability to anticipate working in a professional or managerial occupation by age 30.

Considering the above research findings, which clearly indicate the linkages between socio-economic backgrounds of youth and their career aspirations as well as their eventual educational and career outcomes, it goes without saying that internships have a crucial role to play in setting expectations and shaping the education to employment transition of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds.

sheer hard physical labour that is required in a house-keeping role taught me the value of patience, perfection and attention to detail. My work in the F&B department taught me customer handling skills, grooming as well as time management. Hence, I firmly feel that internships even in unrelated fields should be definitely taken up as they vest you with critical employability skills and work life exposure”

– Priya,
alumni CareeReady



In fact, Antarang’s experience in executing internship connections through the CareeReady program has helped us understand that internships not only help students assimilate critical employability skills and offer career exploration opportunities, but more importantly they act as a vital tool to bridge the opportunity gap for underserved youth by giving them a chance to experience professional life settings, gain practical work skills as well as build professional networks which aid in career progression. This fact assumes critical importance as youth from marginalized backgrounds are most often first-generation learners and do not have access to appropriate career

“I am pursuing my Bachelors in Mass Media. I believe every internship has something to teach and so, when I was offered an internship in a five-star hotel, I decided to take it up although it was unrelated to my field of study. As part of my internship, I had to work in the house-keeping and food and beverages department. The



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guidance or professional role models, networks and work settings.



"I have completed my diploma in IT from a government run polytechnic. As part of my course curriculum, I was required to do a one-month internship. I landed up an internship offer from an NGO as a communications intern. My role required me to apply my software knowledge to design and execute the NGO's corporate communication strategy. Six months into internship, I succeeded in building a portfolio to showcase my work and capabilities. With this I managed to get freelance assignments through professional portals such as Fiverr and through the professional networks that I built during the course of my internship. The internship not only helped expand my professional horizon but helped me gain crucial employability skills. During the course of the internship, I faced many situations wherein I had no prior knowledge or work experience to fall back on or anyone to guide me technically, I learnt in such cases how to

problem solve independently. I now plan to pursue a course in interactive media design and eventually set up my own designing business. The internship has thus laid the foundation of my professional journey"

*– Raj,
alumni CareeReady*



Thus, considering that internships have proven to contribute to broadening of career horizons, reducing the time required for securing employment as well as positively influencing wages and contributing in developing social networks of value, promotion of internship opportunities amongst youth from disadvantaged backgrounds assumes greater significance.

Utility of Internships for Industry

Internships contribute not just to the development of employable youth, but they also equally aid employers to gain access to skilled labour. Some of the benefits that can accrue to employers through successful internship programs include:



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- **Business growth:** Interns can support businesses scale operations through cost effective means, without having to add full time employees.



“We are a non-partisan organisation working towards enabling accountable governance. We work on advocacy issues and require interns to help us in our research projects. We involve about 250 interns annually. We are a lean organisation and have around 28 employees. It is the interns who have contributed to expanding our reach out to partners and beneficiaries”

— Praja

“We are an edtech company offering online skilling courses. We hire about 500 interns per month mainly for marketing roles. As our products are student centric, these interns are best placed to act as ambassadors for our products amongst various educational institutions. Interns have helped expand our geographic footprint while obliterating the need of setting up physical marketing offices, they have

brought in scale of operations and ensured revenue growth while improving our brand presence”

*— Official, Unschool**

(*Note: Views expressed are personal as representative of company and do not represent views of the company as a whole)



- **Access to an on-tap channel for hiring potential employees:** Internships can serve as an excellent medium to hire potential employees as they offer ample opportunity to evaluate candidates for the right fit.



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“We believe hiring interns offers better opportunity to hire the right candidate as it gives you ample time to evaluate whether the person can be a right fit for the organisation. Also, irrespective of whether we hire people with formal certifications or 1-2 years work experience, we need to invest in their training. Very often such candidates come with pre-decided mindsets. As against this, it makes greater sense in hiring smart youngsters who may have yet to complete their education but are hungry to learn and are serious about their careers, as such candidates can be trained and moulded to fit the organisational ethos and culture. We believe in investing in human capital”

— Kenznow



- **A youth perspective to problem solving:** Interns can very often bring a fresh perspective to problem solving as they have a better pulse of the changing times and new market developments.



“Interns bring in a youth perspective and contribute wholesome ideas to any problem-solving situation”

— Official, Unschool*



- **Higher visibility on campuses:** Internships can improve the visibility of corporates on college campuses and help attract the right talent.



“The target audience for our online skilling courses are college students. Since we hire our interns from engineering and management colleges, it automatically results in improving our brand presence in colleges. It has also contributed to improving our reach across colleges and we have been able to hire interns across larger number of colleges over time”

— Official, Unschool*



(*Note: Views expressed are personal as representative of company and do not represent views of the company as a whole)



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- Provision of leadership opportunities for staff vide their roles as mentors to interns: Internships can help hone leadership skills amongst employees who chose to mentor interns.

Internships are beneficial: Need we say more!

Real-world Exposure: Internships offer an opportunity to students to **experience real-world professional work environment**. This helps them build **their transversal skills** - critical thinking and problem solving, interpersonal skills, communication, teamwork and leadership.

Career Clarity: Internships offer an opportunity to explore and test-drive diverse career paths which can help students zero in on the most suited career option. Thus, internships serve as a vital tool for aiding career exploration in practical work settings. This can also result in improving labour market efficiencies due to a more equitable distribution of work force.

Networking: Internships help students in building and developing their professional network. These networks can give them an opportunity to connect with mentors who can guide them through their career paths and most

importantly, help them connect with future employers. This **assumes critical importance** in the context of economically disadvantaged youth who may not be sufficiently visible in a job market in the absence of professional networks as compared to their peers from relatively affluent backgrounds.

Lower transition time to employment: An internship helps strengthen the resume as employers generally tend to have a favourable view of candidates who have had some level of practical work exposure. This can actually translate into a **shorter transition time from education to job**.

Employment opportunity: Internships can actually **convert into a full-time job opportunity**. Data both in a domestic and international context goes to back the fact that conversion ratio for internships tends to be fairly healthy.

Opportunity to build skilled workforce: Internships offer an excellent ground for corporates to hire the right fit for their organisation by giving them ample opportunity to assess the candidate. An organisation can actually invest in building and nurturing the right talent through appropriate training programs and offering career pathway visibility to their interns.

Business growth: Interns can support organisations to scale their businesses in a cost-effective manner



EDUCATION TO WORK JOURNEY

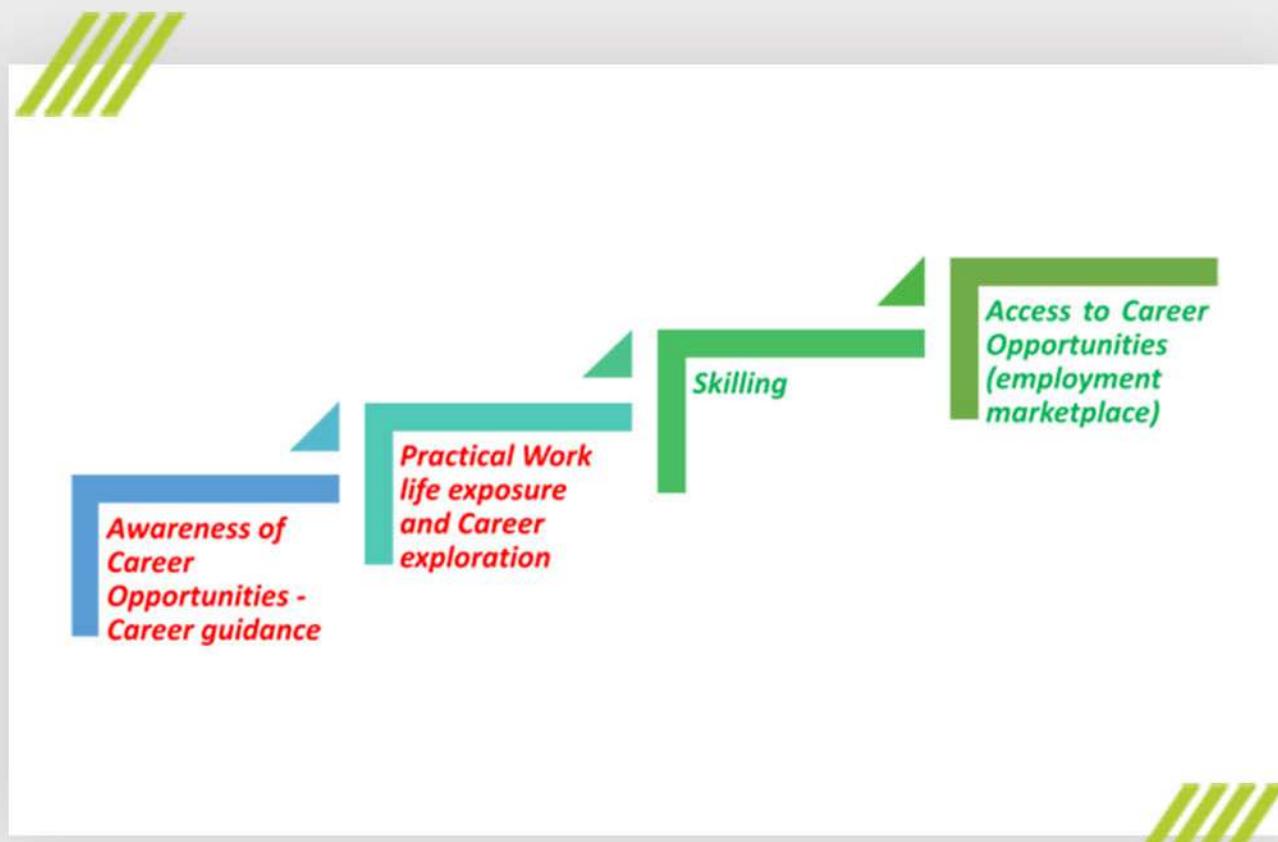
Efforts made to bridge the transition – Indian context

Transitioning from the theoretical, structured and protected environment of an educational institution to the practical, complicated, challenging and dynamic work environment of today is by no means an easy journey to navigate for any youth. A smooth school to work transition requires many prerequisites - awareness of various career options, opportunity to explore careers both with a view to gain clarity of a suitable career

pathway as well as gaining practical work life exposure, adequate work skills, access to career opportunities and finally a society that encourages and enables this journey.

In this section of the report, we take a look at the enablers that are prevailing in our country today to facilitate this school to work journey.

School to Work Transition - Enablers



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I) Awareness of Opportunities – Career guidance

The New Education Policy 2020 (NEP) seeks to embed a multi-disciplinary approach to education right from higher secondary (9th standard). As per the policy vision, students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school so that they can design their own paths of study and life plans.

Given the wide choice of educational and corresponding career pathways that would now open up for students, educational and career guidance assumes critical importance to enable students to navigate this maze of options. The NEP also acknowledges the role of career guidance as a step to improve learning experience at schools and contribute towards student retention in education with particular emphasis on its relevance for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.



“Given that students from underserved communities very often drop out of education early on to support their families, exposure to the world of work through career

guidance, career exploration opportunities through internships etc must be mandated as part of syllabus right from 9th standard itself”

*- Krishnapriya,
alumni CareeReady*

“It is vital that students are adequately guided on appropriate careers and educational pathways suited to their interests and aptitude. Very often, in the absence of proper career guidance, students end up making generic educational choices (eg BCom) which are not related to their field of interest. As a result, students are not in a position to correlate their careers including internships to their educational choices”

*- Professor,
Valia college*

“Career counselling is fundamental to uptake of internship so that students understand various career options and pick right career. Career counselling needs to be imparted from 7-8 standard, even before that they should be encouraged to volunteer or intern for better career opportunities and understanding”

- Praja



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Recognising the criticality of career counselling, the government has initiated steps to embed career counselling as part of its various skilling programs as well the education system. The Skill Saathi counselling program has been launched to create awareness of Skill India Mission, inform youth about opportunities in vocational education and facilitate psychometric testing to guide aspirants in making their career and educational choices basis their interest mapping (Skill Sathi). Various States have also initiated policy measures to embed career guidance within the education system. An example of career counselling initiative by a state level body includes the Kal (career interest mapping) and Abhikshamata (aptitude mapping) Chachni introduced by the Maharashtra government in 2016 to cater to adolescents and young adults in government schools and to guide them in their education and career choices (Mahamitra).

However, despite clear recognition of the importance of career counselling by the policy framework in India, over 90% of the schools do not have a professional career counsellor.



A Mindler survey⁴ on career awareness amongst students in the 14-21 age group revealed that 93% of the students surveyed were aware of just seven career options although more than 250 career options are available in India (Ghosh, 2019).

The 2018 Annual International Career and College Counseling (IC3) Conference acknowledged that India's 350 million students, the biggest student population in the

⁴[Mindler offers online career assessment, career guidance and career counselling services to school students and graduates (outreach of 120000+ students). The said survey refers to a survey carried out by Mindler with 10000+ students (<https://www.mindler.com/blog/career-counselling-importance/>)



world, need at least 1.4 million career counselors to maintain a globally acceptable student - to - school - counselor ratio (Business Standard, 2018). In comparison, the US has about 2.6 million student counsellors for 56 million students (Koshi, 2019).

Further, the ASER 2017 report also goes on to state that although 60% of youth in the age group 14 to 18 years want to continue education beyond XII standard, they lacked direction or information to pursue non-traditional career paths. Professional aspirations are clearly gendered, with males aiming to join the army or police or becoming engineers and females showing preference for teaching or nursing careers. Almost a third of the youth who were currently not enrolled in an educational institution did not have a specific occupation that they aspired to. Finally, 40% of youth did not have any role models for the profession they aspired to. (ASER, 2017).

The ability of India's education system to cater to the student requirement of guidance and counseling clearly highlights the pressing need to ramp up the counselling infrastructure in schools to bridge the gap between education and employment.

2) Access to practical work life exposure and career exploration opportunities

Career exploration opportunities solely with the objective of test-driving career choices and gaining practical understanding of a work day in a chosen career, is best achieved through internships, which are as yet to find firm-footing in our educational set-up.

Practical work life exposure as part of the educational journey, in the Indian context, has so far largely taken the shape of Apprenticeship programs. While apprenticeships do offer practical work life exposure, they are by design not structured to offer career exploration opportunities. They are more in the nature of skilling programs meant to supplement the theoretical understanding of a subject through hands-on work experience in a professional setting, and enabling earn while you learn opportunities.

A brief outline of the implementation status of apprenticeship programs in India is captured below:

- **Apprenticeship Implementation framework in Indian context:** Apprenticeships in India are regulated by the provisions of Apprenticeship Act, 1961. Implementation of the Act is managed by two key ministries viz.



Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Ministry of Human Resource and Development through two separate schemes -National Apprenticeship Promotion scheme (NAPS) and National Apprenticeship Training scheme (NATS) respectively. Both the ministries have their own governance structures and norms to implement the provisions of the Act.

NATS is a one-year programme equipping technically qualified youth with practical knowledge and skills required in their field of work. Students who have passed engineering or have a diploma in engineering can apply for Apprenticeship Training after enrolling themselves with the NATS web portal. On the other hand, NAPS recognises apprentices under five categories with varying level of entry level educational qualifications – beginning right from completion of 5th grade to a degree in engineering/non engineering fields (FICCI, 2019). Post completion of apprenticeship training, candidates need to undergo assessments both on theoretical as well as practical aspects of the training program. Candidates who successfully clear the assessments are awarded certificates jointly by establishments where they are undergoing practical training along with Sector Skill Council/DGT.

Till December 2020 around 10.7

lakh youth have availed/undergoing apprenticeship training under NAPS since its launch in 2016. Presently more than 2.2 lakh apprentices are engaged in various companies and more than 16 lakh youth have registered themselves on the apprenticeship portal to be engaged by various companies as apprentices (MSDE, 2021). Over 10.7 lakh students have been trained under the NATS scheme as of date (NATS, MoE).

● *Integration of apprenticeship with general education:* Efforts are also being made to integrate the apprenticeship system and vocational education within the ambit of school education itself. In the school education space, NSDC is working closely with the Ministry of Education (MoE), facilitating implementation of the ‘Vocationalization of School Education’ program under ‘Samagra Shiksha’. Students can opt for a job-role aligned vocational course along with their regular academic subjects through this mode of study. Till date, more than 16.35 Lakh students have already undergone the assessment-certification process under this scheme. For successful candidates, in search of job opportunities, NSDC in association with respective State Departments, conducts ‘Job Melas’ and links them to Apprenticeship opportunities.

Another, government led initiative



- Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) is a programme conceived for students in degree courses, primarily non-technical, with a view to introduce employable skills into their learning and promote apprenticeship as integral to education. This is akin to an internship.

- **Key Issues faced in implementation of the apprenticeship programs in India:** Despite several policy level amendments to ease the apprenticeship implementation framework, adoption of this program continues to be slow. Key challenges include:



a) Lack of awareness

Lack of awareness of the apprenticeship programmes and the benefits accruing from these programmes is one of the key reasons for slow adoption. The same holds true for educational institutions, parents and students/youth.

b) Complexity and Duplication

Despite considerable efforts in streamlining the apprenticeship system, it remains plagued by layers of complexity and overlap, leading to unnecessary duplication and confusion

c) Lack of an enabling environment

While the government has established a framework for the apprenticeship program and provided support, inadequate incentives and lack of a facilitating environment discourages industry-led partnerships

d) Strain on HR and admin departments

MSMEs need better handholding as financial and manpower resource constraints create additional strain on their HR and administrative departments to navigate the nitty-gritty of the apprenticeship ecosystem

e) Poor quality ITIs & Polytechnic colleges

Upgradation of ITIs and Polytechnic colleges are essential to make the apprentice pipeline relevant to the industry needs. (FICCI, 2019).



3) Access to Skilling opportunities

Recognizing the importance of creating a skilled labour force as a precursor to employment generation, the Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (earlier Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship notified in July 2014) was set up in November 2014 to give



fresh impetus to the Skill India agenda and help create an appropriate ecosystem that facilitates imparting employable skills to its growing workforce. This assumes particular significance given that only an estimated 4.69% of the total workforce in India has undergone formal skill training as compared to 68% in UK, 75% in Germany, 52% in USA, 80% in Japan and 96% in South Korea (NPSDE, 2015).

The Government under the Skill India Mission 2015, has been implementing its flagship scheme - **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** with an objective to skilling people under Short Term Training (STT), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Special Project (SP) across the country. Under the scheme, short duration skill development training is provided to all prospective candidates including candidates belonging to BPL in the country.

As of December 2020, 45.45 lakh candidates have been trained under STT and 60.44 lakh candidates have been oriented under RPL

To further the “Skill India Mission”, the MSDE has also initiated the establishment of model training centres in every district of India. These model training centres, referred to as **“Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra”**



(PMKK), are given a dedicated training mandate for three years under the PMKVY scheme, till the time the scheme exists. Other key skilling initiatives include the Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDUGKY) under the aegis of The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) for training of rural youth.

4) Access to career opportunities (Employment marketplace)

The Indian government has created a number of structures to facilitate more effective confluence between job-seekers and employers, the format of which has evolved over time.



The National Career Service (NCS) is a mission mode project which offers citizens a one-stop solution for all career related services. The online-offline model combines (1) an online platform that brings together employment providers, counsellors, skill providers and job seekers to ensure a match of supply and demand, which is complemented by (2) physical Model Career Centres established largely at the district level employment exchanges.

To give impetus to the employment initiatives in the country, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Govt. of India has been organizing Rozgar Melas across the nation for providing suitable job opportunities in the private sector to the youth.

The government has also been implementing other schemes to boost employment generation - the Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the year 2016-17 for incentivizing employers for employment generation, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) for facilitating self-employment. Government has also tried to address job creation through various supply side measures which includes the recent tax sops to corporates to encourage investment in additional production capacities, execution of various schemes such as MNREGA, PMEGP to enable job creation.

Given below is a list of some of the key government schemes to promote education to employment transition of youth:

Summary of key Central Government schemes

Name of scheme/program	Ministry	Objective of scheme
PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri KaushalVikas Yojana) and PMKK (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra)	MSDE	PMKVY aims at technical skilling of people under Short Term Training (STT), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) schemes.
DDUGKY (Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana)	MoRD	Skills training of rural population
NCS (National Career Service)	MSDE	Offers employment market place for aspiring job seekers through online-



Name of scheme/program	Ministry	Objective of scheme
Skill Saathi	MSDE	-offline model. The online platform also has linkages to career counselling and technical skill providers apart from links to career opportunities
DDUGKY (Pt. Deen Dayal National Apprenticeship Promotion scheme (NAPS) and National Apprenticeship Training scheme (NATS)	MSDE/ MoE	Program intends to create awareness of Skill India Mission, inform youth about opportunities in vocational education and facilitate psychometric testing to guide aspirants in making their career and educational choices basis their interest mapping
‘Vocationalization of School Education’ program under Samagra Shiksha	MSDE/ MoE	Administration of apprenticeship program for youth
Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)	MoE	Students can opt for a job-role aligned vocational course along with their regular academic subjects through this mode of study
Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMR PY)	MoLE	Programme conceived for students in degree courses, primarily non-technical, with a view to introduce employable skills into their learning and promote apprenticeship as integral to education
		Incentivizing employers for employment generation



Name of scheme/program	Ministry	Objective of scheme
Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)	MoF	Facilitating self-employment through various lending schemes
The Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA),	MoRD	Rural employment generation
Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)	MMSME	Employment generation through lending schemes for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

MoE- Ministry of Education, MSDE – Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, MoL-Ministry of Labour and Employment, MoF – Ministry of Finance, MoRD – Ministry of Rural Development, MMSME- Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Education to Work Journey in Indian context–Summary Observations

If we examine the education to work continuum in Indian context, it is clear that action has been initiated on many fronts in terms of efforts to bridge the transition gap between education and employment. However, bulk of these efforts have been focused on developing technical/vocational skills through stress on long- and short-term skilling initiatives and apprenticeship programs as well as facilitating job linkages through creation of employment marketplaces.

Albeit the profusion of skilling schemes, currently there is still a gap left both in terms of adequate implementation of career guidance solutions in the prevailing education system as well as lack of emphasis on internship as an initiative to aid education to work transition. In fact, given that both these initiatives constitute the bedrock and are foundational to an effective school to work transition, inadequate emphasis and development of both these measures can lead to an economically disengaged youth.

Research has amply proved that internship has the potential to act as a



catalyst to make informed career choices, which is vital to have an engaged and productive workforce. Internships act as a bridge to convert the theoretical understanding of a work environment into a more practical, realistic and holistic understanding, besides strengthening the employability skills of the candidates. Even in the case of internships not related to a career of choice, they still have the potential to develop transversal skills among candidates. Further, internships have also shown the ability to shorten the time to an employment linkage.

While work has already begun to embed internship within the education system as evidenced by the NEP policy intent (covered earlier), EQUIP vision, AICTE and UGC tenets (covered later in this document), much of the action on the ground is as yet diffused, and yet to gain traction with a firm and directed implementation focus.



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INTERNSHIP IMPLEMENTATION LANDSCAPE - International and Indian context

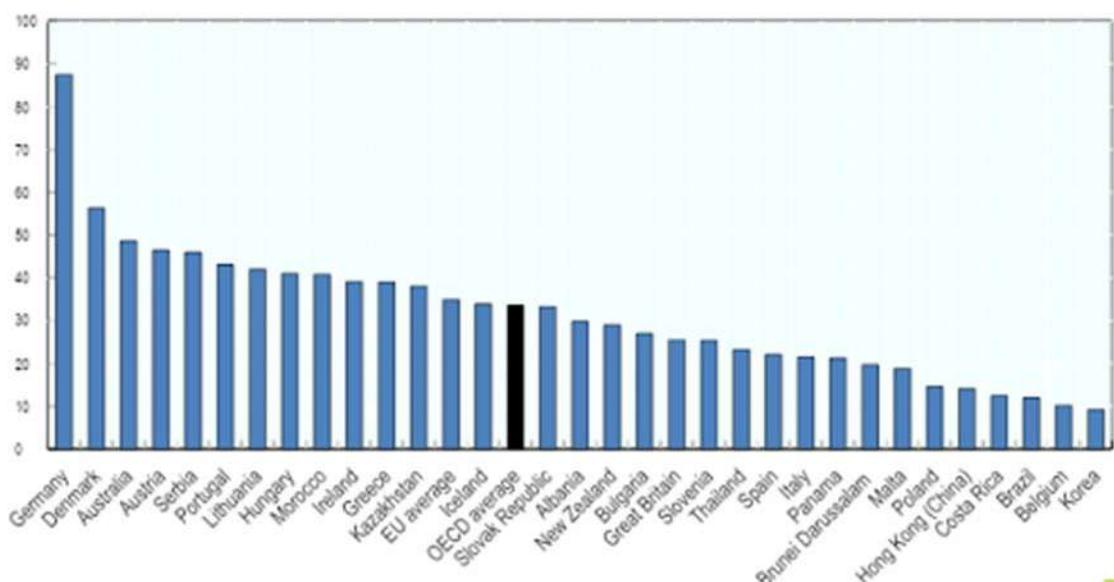
A] International context - Participation Levels and Legal Position

I] Limited Uptake of internship world-wide

Creating stronger connections between schools and the labour market is important, not only to reduce the number of school leavers who will become NEET, but also to ensure that youngsters understand the changing requirements of today's workplaces. Yet OECD (OECD, 2021) data suggests that participation in orientation programmes, especially

internships, remains limited in many countries. On average across the OECD countries with available data, 34% of 15-year-old students reported having done an internship; 41% had participated in job shadowing or a worksite visit; 38% had attended a job fair; 50% had spoken to a career advisor at school, and 25% with a career advisor outside of school; 61% had completed a questionnaire to determine their interests and abilities; 72% had searched the internet for information about careers. *Children report low participation in*

Percentage of 15-year-old students who did an internship to explore future educational and career opportunities, by country



face-to-face programmes that involve committing time and resources outside of normal day-to-day schooling, and higher participation in activities such as searching the internet for information on careers and educational opportunities.

OECD data also reveals a large divergence in the internship participation levels between countries. For example, a full 87% of students in Germany reported participating in an internship, compared to only 9% of students in Korea. Countries such as Germany, Denmark, Australia, Austria which display high engagement levels with internship programs have an integrated education system with equal importance being given to both theoretical aspects of education as well as practical work life exposure through apprenticeship programs integrated into the mainstream education system. UK does not have an integrated apprenticeship program. (FICCI, 2019).

Possible reasons for the divergence in the level of internship uptake across various countries could be the level of enablers within the education system to promote exposure to practical work life opportunities at an early age, favourable regulatory environment including government support, overall awareness and perception levels about

the utility of internships amongst students, availability of suitable internship opportunities, and the level of industry engagement and involvement.



II] Regulatory environment governing implementation of educational internships world wide

In this section of the report, we look at the regulatory environment impacting the implementation of educational internships world-wide. We have particularly chosen to focus on educational internships, given the context of the NEP which seeks to embed it within the Indian education system. As part of this analysis, following regulatory issues will be examined:

- a) **Employment standards:** Are interns recognised as employees?
- b) **Education quality related regulations:** What are the provisions to ensure educational quality of internships?
- c) **Regulations regarding health and**



safety: Are interns covered?

d) Protection against discrimination and harassment at work: Where do interns stand?

A study by ILO (ILO, 2018b) on the aforementioned issues throws up some interesting findings, some of which are given below:

a) Employment standards: Are interns recognised as employees?

A look at the country wise legislations reveals that, by and large, number of countries exclude or partially exclude students undertaking internships as part of their studies from entitlements to employment benefits.

In January 2018, the **U.S. Department of Labor** (DOL, 2018) issued a statement to act as a primer to determine if an individual can be classified as an unpaid intern. The primary beneficiary test does not include a rigid set of requirements; instead, it is a non-exhaustive list of factors to determine who is the primary beneficiary of the internship. These factors include:

- The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation;

- The extent to which the internship provides training that would be similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by an educational institution;

- The extent to which the internship is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit;

- The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar;

- The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning;

- The extent to which the intern's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern; and

- The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

The DOL says that if examination of these circumstances reveals that an intern or student is an employee, then he or she is entitled to both



minimum wage and overtime pay.

In the United Kingdom, students who are required to do an internship for less than one year as part of a UK-based further or higher education course are not entitled to the National Minimum Wage. Similarly, government funded traineeships of up to six months with a skills programme that includes a work experience placement and work preparation training is excluded from the ambit of minimum wage. **Canadian provincial laws contain significant exclusions for placements that form part of a recognised education course or a programme of professional training.** In Ontario, for example, there are exemptions for work performed under a programme authorised by a secondary school board. In **Germany**, informal or 'voluntary' internships are generally subject to employment standards, even if they do not involve an employment relationship. But 'compulsory' internships undertaken as part of an educational course of study are treated differently. **Traineeships mandated by educational institutions or vocational training requirements, as well as those undertaken in preparation for or concomitantly with vocational studies or university education and lasting no more than three months are exempt from provisions of Minimum Wages Act.**

In France, however, every internship is required to be undertaken under a tripartite agreement between intern, host and educational institution and for any arrangement exceeding two months the intern is entitled to compensation. In South Africa, the definitions of employment in the Labour Relations Act and Basic Conditions of Employment Act appear broad enough to cover student interns who are undertaking productive work under the direction and control of the business or organization hosting them. The following table summarises the position of interns in reference to their recognition as employees in various countries:



Country	Status of intern
USA	Not considered an employee if the internship is for educational purpose for a fixed time period and with clear understanding that there is no entitlement of compensation or job
United Kingdom	Educational internships exempted from Minimum wages subject to certain pre-conditions
France	Internships beyond two months need to be compensated. Internships need to be formalised through contractual arrangement between intern, educational institution and employer
Germany	Educational internships not exceeding three months exempted from Minimum wages. Informal or voluntary internships generally subject to employment standards
Canada	Educational internships exempted from Minimum wages subject to certain pre-conditions
South Africa	Student interns covered under various employment laws

Our view: A look at the world-wide position of interns clearly reveals that, in most of the countries, internships undertaken as a part of educational requirements are not entitled to employment benefits such as minimum wages. A more equitable view however, would be to ensure that internships beyond a threshold time period say 2-3 months are clearly compensated to prevent undue exploitation. Also considering that Apprenticeships which are also learning arrangements and stand compensated, there does not seem adequate merit in treating internships as unpaid arrangements especially for longer periods of time.



b) Education quality related regulations: What are the provisions to ensure educational quality of internships?

The extent to which different jurisdictions have made provision to ensure the educational quality of student internships and Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities varies markedly. Some jurisdictions have endeavoured to regulate to ensure minimum standards, such as the stipulation of learning objectives and supervision requirements. Others have taken a 'soft law' approach, using codes of conduct and best practice guidelines, while still other jurisdictions have not addressed the quality of internship learning at all.

Australia has a specific regulatory regime that governs nationally recognised qualifications which form part of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). In the higher education sector, this role is performed by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), while in the vocational education sector, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (AQSA). However, AQSA provides no specific guidance to training providers as to how student placements in workplaces should be structured,

assessed or managed to ensure high quality learning outcomes and positive student experiences, while TEQSA provides only broad guidance. In the United Kingdom the quality assurance of internships and work experience placements is predominantly pursued through voluntary quality charters and standards. Individual higher education institutions are responsible for ensuring the quality of their students' work placements and have their own internal quality assurance guidelines and procedures. At a national level, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has produced a Code of Practice on Work Based Learning (WBL). Whilst not formally binding, higher education institutions are expected to take the Code of Practice into account when developing their own guidelines. Some of the general principles for implementing high quality WBL as envisaged by the Code of Practice include:

- Learning outcomes are clearly identified and relevant to the overall programme of study;
- The learning opportunities provided are appropriate;
- Students are provided with appropriate information, support and guidance prior to, throughout and following their work-based and



placement learning;

- Institutions to regularly review policies and procedures for securing, monitoring, administering and reviewing work-based and placement learning.

In contrast to the largely voluntary charter approach to regulation of educational quality of internships in the United Kingdom and South Africa, both **France** and **Romania** have sought to actively regulate the quality of educational internships. Since the adoption of the 2011 Cherpion Law, and further changes in 2014, **all internships in France must be completed under a tripartite agreement between intern, host organization and educational institution (Code de l'éducation art L 124-5).** That internship contract must specify both the educational objectives of the internship and its conditions. For example, the internship agreement must state the activities the intern will undertake and the skills they will develop (art D124-4(4), art L124-2(2)). In addition, the intern must be supervised by both the educational institution with which they are enrolled and by the organization with which they are placed (art L124-2(3), art L124-9).

The regulation in **Argentina** is more similar to that in **France** and **Romania**, in that it attempts to control

the educational quality of internship experiences. Before an internship can be undertaken a master agreement between the host organization and the educational institutions, and an internship agreement with the student, must be signed. The internship agreement must specify, amongst other things, the contents of the educational internship plan and tasks assigned to the intern (Law No 26,427, art 9), and the educational objectives of the internship must be specified in the master agreement, as well as the rights and obligations of the host organization and educational institution (art 6). Law No 26,427 also addresses the issue of supervision of student interns. It requires that a teacher be appointed by the educational institution and a tutor appointed by the host company in order to assist and evaluate the intern (arts 17-18). Upon completion of the internship, the intern receives a certificate, which details the duration of the internship and the tasks which were undertaken (art 18).

Brazil's federal Law No 11,788 of 2008 likewise seeks to regulate the content or quality of internship experiences in various ways. Aside from the need for a formal agreement between the three parties involved, it is required that each intern have both an academic advisor and a supervisor from the host organization. Internships for tertiary students in



Japan appear to be primarily a recruitment tool rather than a vehicle for learning. These internships are largely governed by voluntary codes of conduct.

Our view:

Monitoring the educational content of internships again seems to attract fairly divergent approaches world-wide. We believe internships undertaken as part of educational curriculum must have some form of assessment and monitoring jointly by the educational institution and the corporates. Further, they need to be clearly mapped to pre-specified educational outcomes to ensure that they serve the purpose for which they are being undertaken by the students and do not work as unilateral arrangements dictated by employer requirements alone.

c) Regulations regarding health and safety: Are interns covered?

While most of the countries seem to recognise the rights of interns to health and safety, the jury is still out on whether they need to be covered under employer liability insurance as in many jurisdictions interns do not enjoy the status of a regular “employee”.

In **Germany**, health and security standards are regulated by the Working Conditions Act, and extend to all interns, even those not entitled to the minimum wage. There also seems to be a general consensus that interns will be regarded as employees for workers compensation purposes and accordingly will generally be covered by employer liability insurance. In **Canada**, trainees who would not otherwise be regarded as employees are expressly covered by provincial occupational health safety legislation, and also workers compensation laws. In **Australia**, students undertaking internships are covered by health and safety laws, By contrast, Australian workers compensation statutes are generally drafted so as to apply only to employees in the common law sense. in the **United Kingdom**. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 clearly extends to individuals beyond employees, including interns. As against this, interns will only be covered by the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 only if they are employees. In **Japan**, interns who do not satisfy the definition of 'worker' in Article 9 of the Labour Standards Act (No 49 of 1947) are not covered by the workers compensation regime included in Chapter 8 of that Act, nor the Industrial Safety and Health Law.



d) Protection against discrimination and harassment at work: Where do interns stand?

Here again, the position of interns with respect to protection against harassment at work seems to differ across nations as interns are not recognised as employees in many jurisdictions.

The equality or anti-discrimination laws in Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom are framed broadly enough to protect student interns even if they are not employees. France specifically prohibits the harassment of students engaged in formal educational internships. By contrast, it would seem that the Employment Equity Act in South Africa would apply to student interns only if they were employees, and that the same is true in Japan. China has no separate law or legal regime that forbids employment discrimination. While the Employment Promotion Law of the People's Republic of China and the Labour Law of the People's Republic of China include provisions that ensure basic principles of employment equality, these do not appear at present to extend to student interns. In the United States, some equality laws have been extended to cover unpaid interns, but otherwise, largely courts have refused to extend

the protection of such laws to students, on the ground that they are not employees. In Australia too, there is no consistency in whether or not student interns are covered by laws prohibiting harassment and discrimination in the workplace. The federal anti-discrimination laws cover students only if they can show an employment relationship.

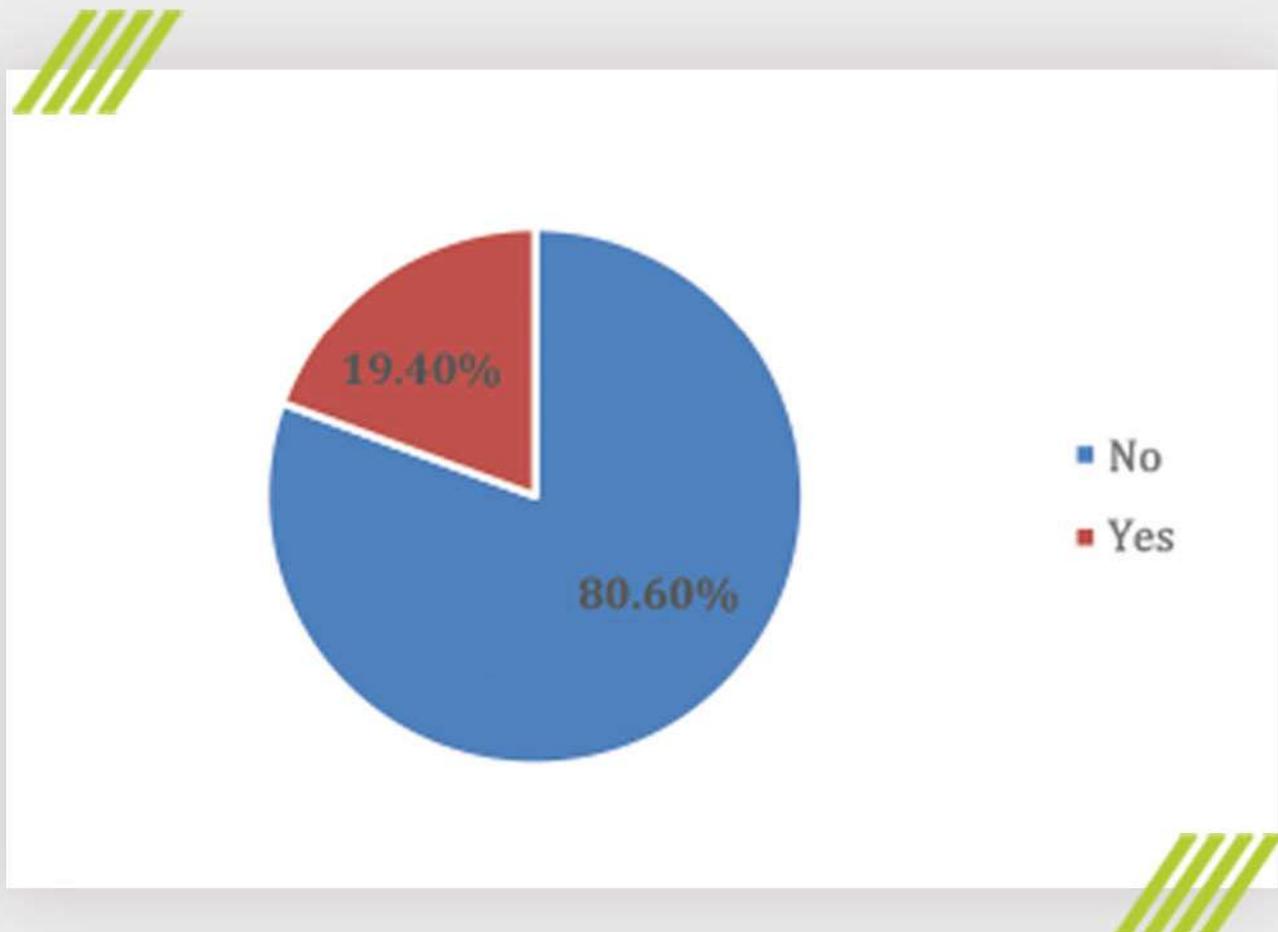
Our view - summary observations:
Educational Internships world-wide seem to be fairly at receiving end when it comes to recognition of their right to compensation, health and safety as well as protection against discrimination and harassment. There seems to be no uniform position on monitoring the job content or achievement of learning outcomes through the internship arrangement either. Considering the basic purpose for which educational internships are undertaken, it only seems fair that there should be some form of monitoring and assessment of the internship arrangements against pre-defined learning outcomes. Further, internships beyond a threshold period need to be compensated along with protection against discrimination and harassment at work.



B] Internship landscape - Indian context

The uptake of internships in India is as yet at a nascent stage with limited awareness of its utility and relevance amongst the student populace at large.

Of the 634 youth who participated in our internship survey, close to 80% had never taken up internship opportunities



So far, internships in the Indian context have been limited to few streams of education, which mandate the requirement of such work experiences. In this section of the report, we examine the key drivers of the internship landscape in India and understand how the numbers stack up for India.





i] Key Players affecting the Internship landscape

a] Demand drivers

Demand for internships in India has largely been shaped by the requirements of the educational courses which mandate compulsory internships.

However, there has been increasing recognition for embedding internships within all forms of education right from **schooling years**. This is evident by the provisions contained in the **NEP, 2020**, which talks of introducing internships right from Grade 6 with the objective of familiarising students with vocational subjects.

The **Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion program (EQUIP, 2019-2024)** by the Department of Higher Education, lays down a five-year vision for comprehensive re-hauling of India's higher education system with the aim of upgrading the quality of higher education to global standards, doubling the enrolment into higher education as well as making it more relevant by improving the employability of the students passing out of higher education.

The program contains many provisions towards embedding internships as part of higher education systems both with the intention of moving towards global teaching



learning practices as well as towards improving the employability of students. Some of the key provisos are as below:

- As part of the curriculum re-design, EQUIP proposes guidelines for a mandatory four months internship and community engagement in all undergraduate programs. Internships can be with State governments or local administration to study government schemes, with local industry as well as research internships with faculty/researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions.
- Towards promoting employability and entrepreneurship, EQUIP proposes that internships need to be promoted most conveniently. Internships could also be done locally (through local MSME network) and can be of short duration (one-two months during summer break) as well as paid/unpaid. It suggests that such internships are assessed, made credit based and deliverables based, with specific assignment. In the event of logistic difficulty or any other issue, internship tie-up could also be done as a project or a problem statement given by local industry or MSME to the student.
- The vision document goes on to suggest the creation of a national internship platform/portal for

students and possible recruiters which would also facilitate an indirect network effect involving alumni, college placement offices, job sites, and Ed tech providers

- EQUIP also proposes creation of an exclusive, professionally run Centre for Employment and Entrepreneurship for higher education institutions for student counselling, internship sourcing, market-based inputs on employment, entrepreneurship / start-up ideas & forward linkage. There can be either an individual Centre for every institution or one Centre for every 3-5 institutions in geographical proximity. These Centres must be manned not by college teachers, but HR professionals contracted from the market.
- The program advocates for a critical role to be played by industry in developing the skill curriculum and proposes advocacy measures towards building industry trust and involvement. EQUIP also proposes reforms in Labour Laws to mandate and if possible, incentivize industry to hire only vocationally certified students as workforce, to collaborate with local colleges for joint projects and to partner in skill training, faculty training & internships/placements.
- The program also suggests ramping up Counselling, Capacity building &



awareness in higher educational institutions on a large scale to facilitate acceptance and adoption of skill based/internship linked education.

- The program envisions creation of a formal vocational education pathway integrated into the college system with credit structure applicable to both. Vocational education is expected to impart industry relevant and internship embedded skill education at various levels, with communication skills, cognitive skills, and other life skills incorporated into their learning. The program also proposes introduction of internship/apprenticeship embedded degree courses like BBA and streamlining of BVoc by introducing compulsory internships.

- The vision document calls for exploring the role of corporate CSR - identifying 10,000 corporations in the country and assigning a set of degree colleges to each with the guidance and support of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs so that both internships and funding for skills can be addressed in one go.

While EQUIP serves as a vision document for embedding internships within India's higher education system, the AICTE Internship policy and the UGC Internship policy (UGC, 2020) have

laid down comprehensive guidelines for implementing internships in technical and non-technical education affiliated to these respective institutions.

The AICTE Model Internship Guidelines (AICTE Policy) mandate minimum of about 600 to 700 hours of total internship duration for B. Tech degree and 450-500 hours for three-year diploma students. Some of the key provisions of the Act include:

- A framework for calculation of academic credits and the minimum academic credits that a student must earn through these internships for both degree and diploma programs.
- Giving students the choice to either work on innovation or entrepreneurial activities resulting in start-up or undergo internship with industry/ NGO's/ Government organizations/ Micro/ Small/ Medium enterprises to make themselves ready for the industry.
- Student requirement to prepare a file containing documentary proof of the activities done by her/him as well as a daily log to document their learning experiences and an internship report at the end of the program. The evaluation of these activities can be done by Programme Head/Cell In-charge/ Project Head/ Training and



Placement Officer/ faculty mentor or Industry Supervisor.

● **The structure of the Training and Placement Cell** that must be set up as well as the activities that an institute needs to undertake to assist their students in undertaking the industrial training experience. Clear guidelines have been laid down for placement cells and students listing the role of and activities to be undertaken by each of these parties to source internships as well as guidelines for industry for providing such internship opportunities.

● **The guidelines to industry include suggestions on how to plan, structure and execute an internship program.** These include suggestions on designing the internship plan through clear definition of the job description, internship schedule and expected learning outcomes, tips on orientation, supervision and feedback to interns etc. The AICTE policy also lays out the mapping of internship programme outcomes with NBA (National Board of Accreditation) Graduate attributes.

AICTE has also set up an **internship portal** to help students and internship providers (which include public and private sector institutions including government departments) find suitable opportunities/candidates. The selected intern's profile and

availability are validated by their respective colleges before they join or acknowledge an offer.

UGC has formulated **Apprenticeship/internship Guidelines** (UGC, 2020) for Higher Education Institutions with the objective of embedding them in general degree programmes offered by the Universities.

As per the guidelines, any UG degree programme will have an option to embed at least one semester of apprenticeship / internship as part of the degree programme. The period of apprenticeship/internship training shall be decided on the basis of individual requirements of course concerned. Some of the key guidelines regarding implementation of internship programs as elucidated by UGC include:

● **Apprenticeship / internship training are required to be assigned in the specific domain areas of student's coursework.** The policy suggests that National Occupation Standards (NOS) could be one approach to align the courses and curriculum to the standards set by the industry. If required, relevant course/s may be introduced/realigned to provide basic knowledge/training in the area of apprenticeship/internship. The HEIs in consultation with Sector



Skill Councils, AICTE, FICCI, CII, commercial and non-commercial organizations or enterprises, and industry could design the apprenticeship/internship embedded degree programme.

● HEIs offering apprenticeship / internship - embedded degree programs will develop and maintain domain specific Learning Outcomes for the Apprenticeship / Internship Programme. Apprenticeship / internship learning outcomes will focus on knowledge and abilities that prepare students for potential employment.

● Credits for apprenticeship / internship programme shall be included in the total credits of the entire programme. **At least 20% of the total Credits for the degree programme will be assigned to apprenticeship / internship.** The students are required to pass the apprenticeship / internship course. Reappearance for failed / uncompleted apprenticeship / internship training is mandatory.

● The HEIs will need to set up an **Apprenticeship Cell** with an overall role of a facilitator and counsellor for apprenticeship/internship related activities.

● The HEIs are recommended to have a **prior Memorandum of**

Understanding (MoU) with discipline specific commercial and non-commercial organizations or enterprises, offices, industry etc. for providing apprenticeship/internship, before introducing the apprenticeship/internship embedded degree programme

Some of the other streams which require compulsory completion of internships include the **medical** field. As laid down by the National Medical Commission, all medical students need to complete a 12-month rotating internship post completion of their final MBBS exam to be eligible for a degree in medicine. Similarly, the NCTE Regulations (NCTE, 2014) also prescribe 'field engagement' of upto 20 weeks for elementary and secondary **teacher** training programs like D.Ed B.Ed, M.Ed etc. Safe to say many professional qualifications need some form of internships.

As a result of the aforementioned guidelines, which either mandate or recommend some form of embedded internships, some of the key sectors with high demand for internships include engineering, management, computer science, graphic designing, architecture etc.



b] Supply side influencers

Supply side influencers of internships in India include private sector players, civil society organisations and public sector employers including government departments.

According to a report by Letsintern (Letsintern, 2018), some of the companies which have ranked among top paying internship providers in India include Microsoft, ITC, Cadbury, Goldman Sachs, Britannia etc. In fact, the Vault-2022, 100 best Internship ranking (Vault, 2022) lists the Infosys InStep internship program at number 1 ranking across multiple categories which includes overall number 1 ranking, best internship for computer science, best internship for compensation and benefits, promotion of diversity etc. The TCS Talent Nurture Internship program has also been listed on the Vault for various categories such as HR, Information Technology, Strategy and Business development.

Besides corporate internships, government departments have also been active in offering internship opportunities for undergraduate students.

The AICTE internship portal (<https://internship.aicte-india.org/>) has a provision for urban local bodies to

post their internship requirements through the TULIP program (The Urban Learning Internship Program). TULIP aims to strengthen youth engagement towards urban initiatives, creating an ecosystem where youth can contribute towards building a liveable city. As of September 2021, close to 18000 internship openings have been posted on the AICTE portal through TULIP. (TULIP, 2021). Other notable government internship programs include those promoted by NITI Aayog, the RBI, various ministries including the Ministry of External Affairs, Finance, Corporate Affairs, Law and Justice, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

c] Role of Aggregators – Demand Supply matching

A third set of players who have played a critical role in facilitating the growth of internship programs in India include private sector aggregators such as Internshala, LinkedIn and Letsintern along with the public sector aggregators like TULIP listed above. *Given the limited penetration of internship programs in India coupled with dearth of information on its availability and relevance, these aggregators have played a crucial role both in raising the*



visibility of such programs, as well as creating a marketplace for demand and supply players to meet and transact. They have also contributed substantially in democratizing the availability of internship opportunities to students through their pan-India reach across demographic profiles.



Details of some of the key players in this field, captured below, indicate the growing demand for internships in the country:

Internshala:

Launched initially as a WordPress blog dealing with education, technology, and issues about gaps in skills, Internshala was eventually converted into an internship portal. Over the years, Internshala has evolved as one of the most popular internship marketplaces in India. It is a free portal for both interns as well as employers. Currently, Internshala has more than 4.5 million annual student visits and

80000+ companies registered on its website. Internshala provides internships in various sectors like web development, arts, management, science, IT, data analysis, law, engineering, architecture, and many others. Internshala also offers online educational training in various streams through its e-learning portal. The courses on offer are on a chargeable basis but can be downloaded along with the supporting materials such as videos for offline reference. (Startuptalky, 2021).

Letsintern:

Another popular internship website in India, Letsintern, is being used by ~4 million students and hosts about 30000 companies. Letsintern helps students find internships of all forms (Internships, Visual Internships, Brand Evangelists, Volunteer Opportunities, Campus Ambassador and Full time jobs). The website (Letsintern) offers internship opportunities in a wide variety of fields and also offers various learning sources to students such as advisory write-ups on trends and developments related to internship opportunities in various sectors.

Linkedin:

LinkedIn is mainly used for professional networking, and allows job seekers to post their CVs and employers to post jobs. It also offers a learning platform to candidates to help gain employability skills under

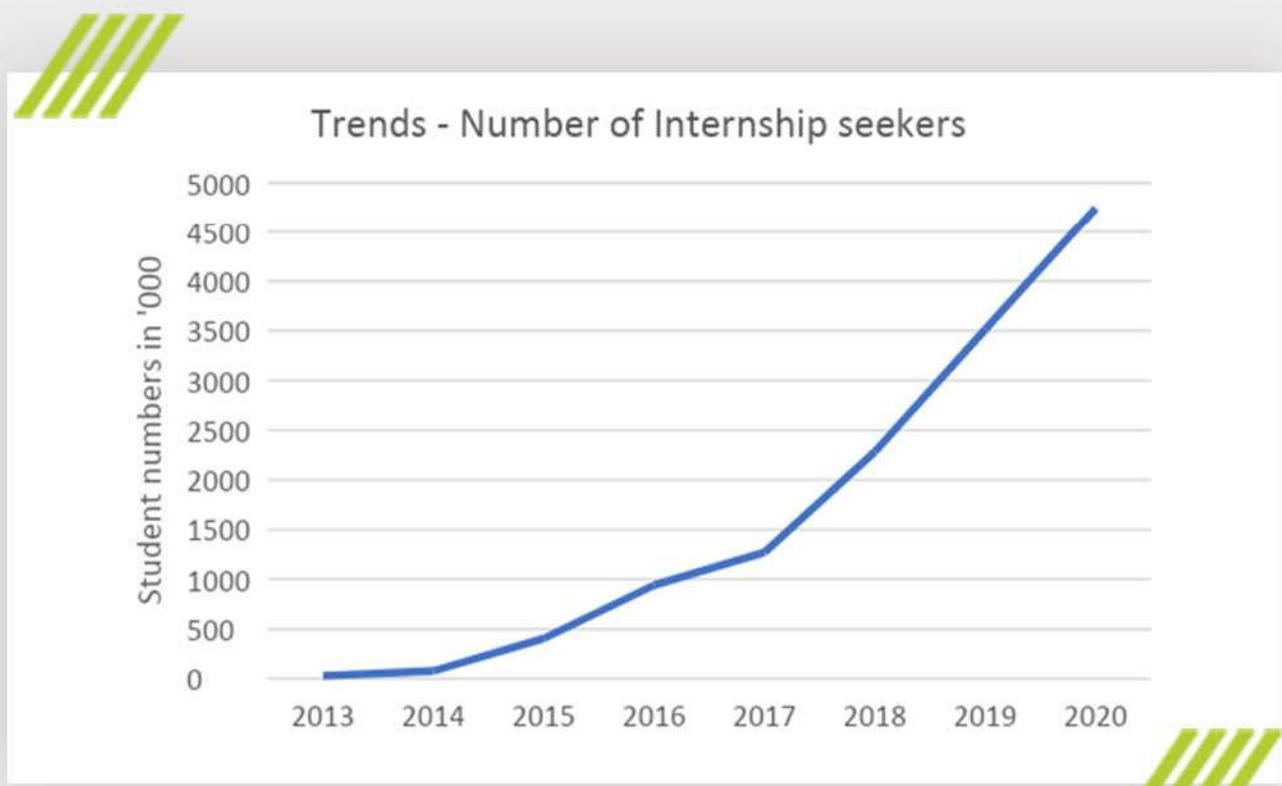


three broad categories – Business, Creativity and Technology.

Apart from the above, internship platforms like Glassdoor, HelloIntern, Stumagz, Indianinternship and others are also slowly gaining popularity in India.

The role played by these aggregators assumes critical importance in the absence of a centralised platform In India which can house data on emerging internship opportunities as well as offer students guidance on navigating the field of internships.

Demand for internships – how does this look?



Source: Internshala-2020a, Outlook-2021

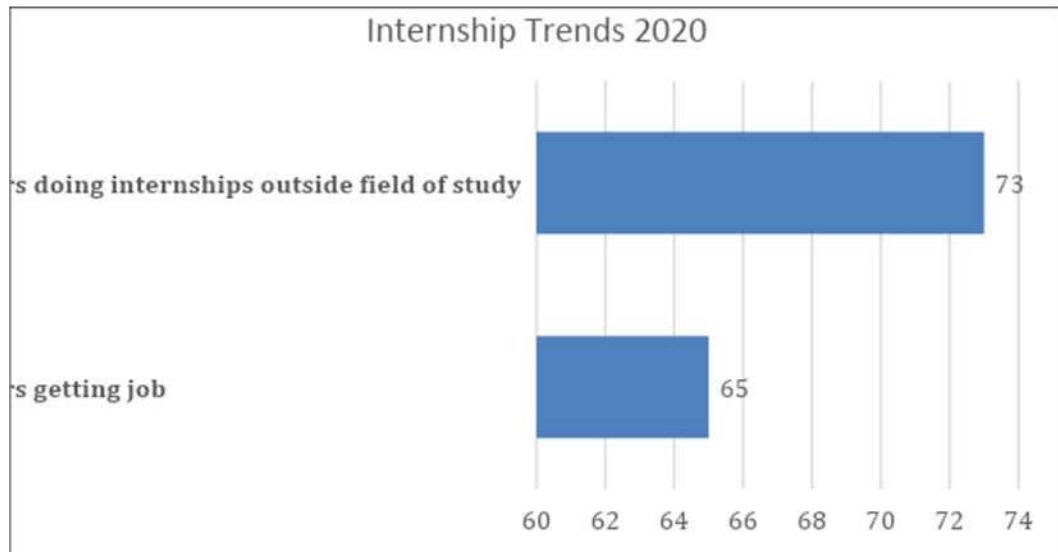


ii] Internships in India – what do the trends indicate?

In this section of the report, we examine the emerging trends in the internship landscape in India, both in terms of how the numbers stack up, as well as key demand and supply contributors.

Given the largely unregulated nature as well as limited penetration of these work arrangements, we have relied on uptake numbers available in the public domain through Internshala – a key aggregator operating in this space. These numbers may be considered fairly representative of the broad trends emerging in the Indian internship landscape.

The increasing frequency of internships posted on Internshala is an indication of rising awareness regarding internships in India. The year 2020, despite COVID-19, saw a rise of 35% in internship seekers as compared to 2019. Close to 5 million students registered on Internshala in 2020 seeking internship positions.



Source: Economic Times, 2021

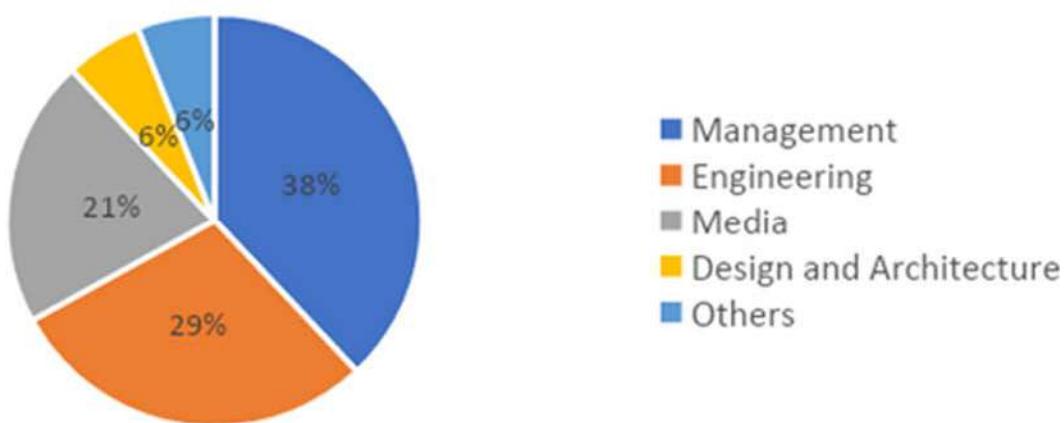


WHY INTERN?

Advantages and Challenges of Internships for Adolescents: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

Internshala data reveals that 73% of students participated in internships outside of their field of study indicating how students are using internships to test drive their career choices based on their interests and skills. Around 65% of the internship seekers ended up with job linkages indicating the strong value add created by internships. Delhi NCR, Maharashtra and Karnataka were the top states contributing to the demand for internships. Over 75% of the students indicated a preference for virtual internships (Internshala, 2020a).

Internship seeker - fields of interest

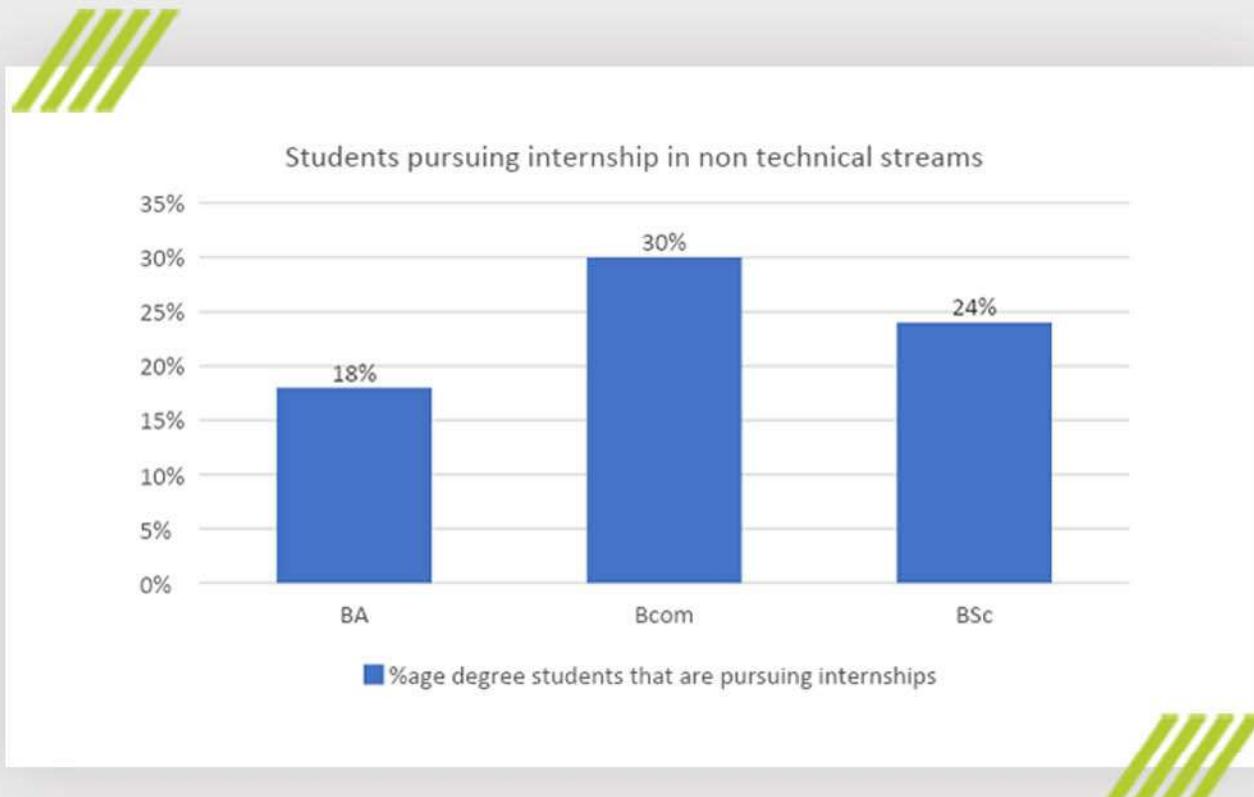


Source: Internshala, 2020a

The fields of interest amongst internship seekers continued to reflect the compulsory internship requirement in select streams, making a case for mandating internships as part of curriculum. Engineering, Management, Architecture streams require compulsory internships under the AICTE internship policy, resulting in a high demand for internships in these fields. Similarly demand for media internships emerge from programmes such as BMM which have embedded internship requirements.



This is also evident from the relatively low internship demand from non-technical fields.



Source: Internshala, 2020c

“Many of my classmates in BA stream (Economics and Statistics) were not cognizant about the utility of internships and most of them contemplated internships only in their last year of graduation. As a result, many of such internships were undertaken with the thought of strengthening the CV rather than with the intention of gaining valuable work life

exposure”

– Sanika, interned at Antarang

“Internships are not mandated by the educational curriculum of streams such as BCom. As a result, students do not see merit in taking up internships. Further, as there is no provision for taking up internships within the curriculum framework, uptake of internships is difficult



WHY INTERN?

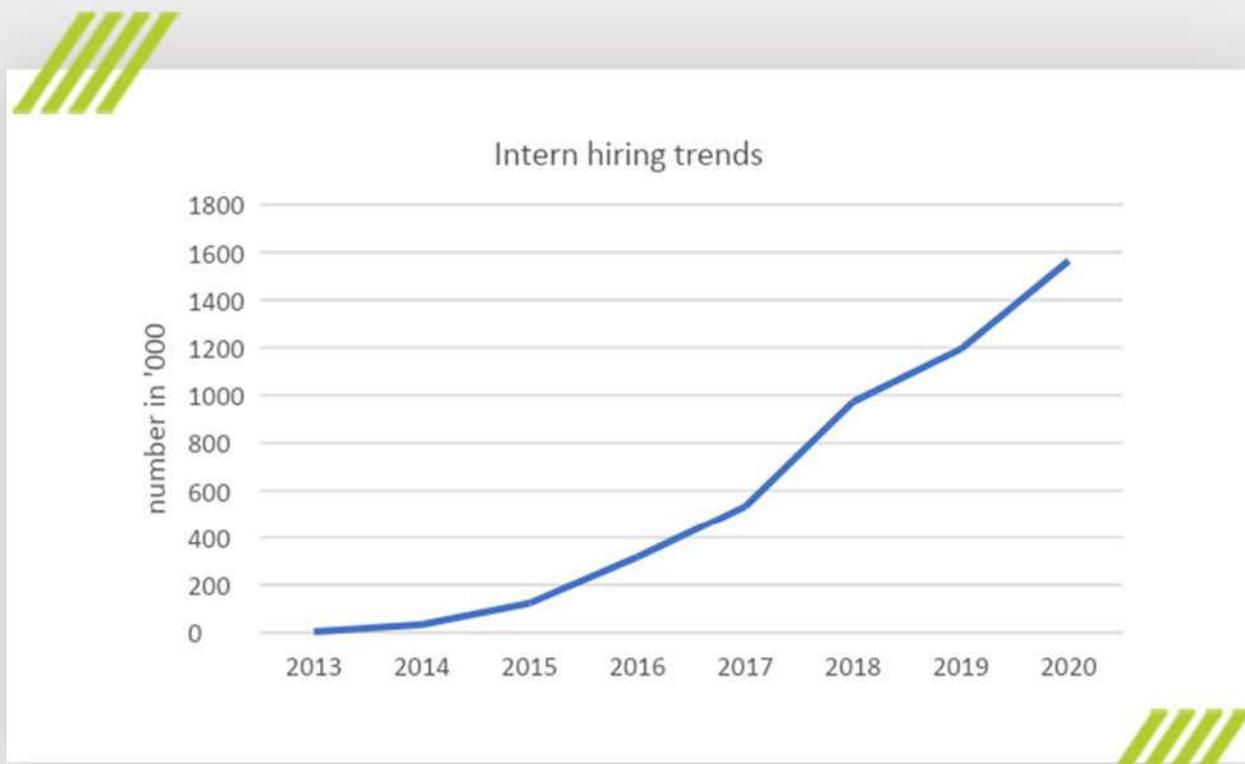
Advantages and Challenges of Internships for Adolescents: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

as these could clash with college timings as well as their routine studies.”

- Professor, Valia College

massive difference between the number of internship seekers and the internship positions being offered with demand at almost 3

Supply side – do internships on offer match the demand?



Source: Internshala-2020b, Outlook-2021

While 2020 saw a 31% rise in internship positions being offered to students, the pace has been much slower when compared to demand. While demand for internships has grown at a compounded growth rate (CAGR) of over 40% since 2018, growth in internship positions has been at a much lower 15% CAGR since 2018, depicting the stark demand-supply mismatch. This mismatch is also evident from the

times the supply. As per 'India Skills Report 2019', 84 per cent of Indian students would like to take up internships, however, only 37 per cent of organisations provide such opportunities for students.



WHY INTERN?

Advantages and Challenges of Internships for Adolescents: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

“College education is theoretical and not aligned to market requirements. Teaching methodologies are outdated. There is no guidance on how to think through a situation or navigate the education to job transition. Our current education system does not prepare the students for the job market. In the absence of relevant skills companies would not be keen to hire college students”

*– Official, UnSchool**

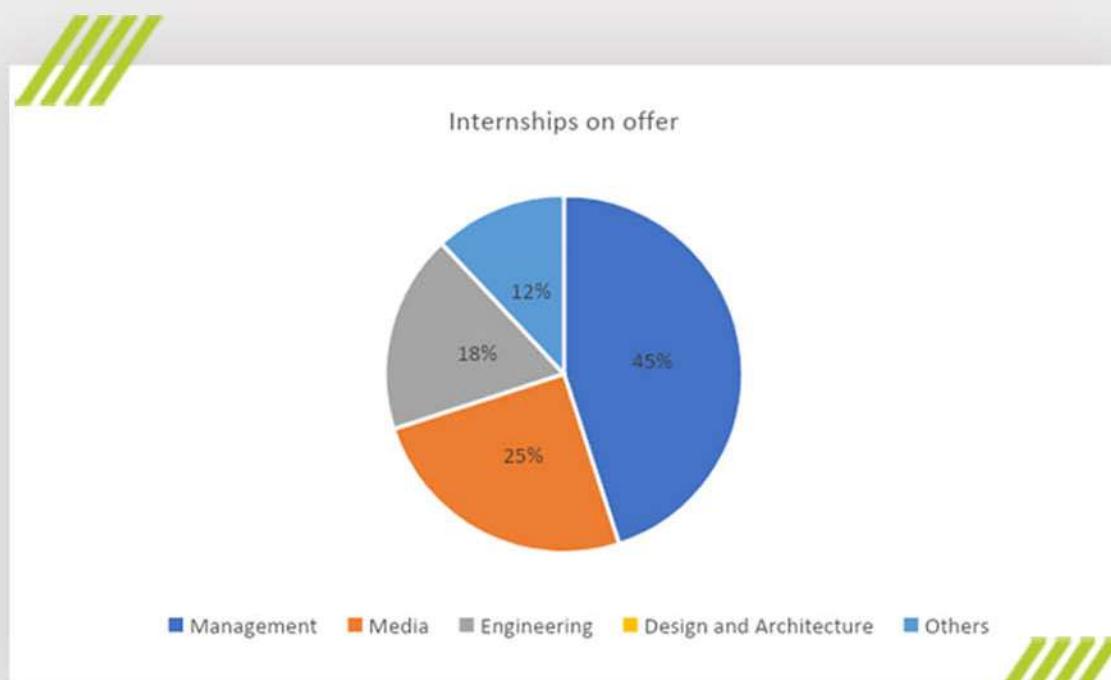
(*Note: Views expressed are personal as representative of company and do not represent views of the company as a whole)

“The purpose of Higher Educational Institutions should be to prepare the student for the job market. However, colleges are functioning like extension of schools”

- Kenznow

“Courses like Bcom lay greater emphasis on understanding theoretical concepts and do not really vest students with the necessary skills to make the education to employment transition. This could be one of the reasons for corporate apathy”

- Professor, Valia College



Source: Youthkiawaz, 2021



WHY INTERN?

Advantages and Challenges of Internships for Adolescents: A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective



Sectoral break-up of internships on-offer again revealed the predominance of fields such as management and engineering. Management saw the maximum number of internships with 45% opportunities in profiles like marketing, business development, sales, digital marketing, branding, customer service, market research. The second most popular field was media at 25% offering internships in profiles including content writing, journalism, editorial, blogging, copywriting, social media marketing, PR, photography, and videography. Engineering with 18% internships in fields including but not limited to programming and software development

“We hire mainly from management and engineering streams. These streams have mandatory internship requirements. Engineers are expected to account for 60% of our hirings”

– Official, Unschool*

(*Note: Views expressed are personal as representative of company and do not represent views of the company as a whole)

“To give approx. percentage, around 40% of our hirings are likely from streams where internships are mandatory eg the Law and management streams”

– Praja.

Delhi NCR, Mumbai and Bangalore accounted for over 65% of the internships indicating a fair geographic concentration of positions on offer. According to Internshala, close to 49% of the internships were followed by preplacement offers (Internshala, 2020b).



Internship execution – Antarang’s experience

Antarang Foundation, since its inception in 2012, has been working with the underserved youth, with the sole aim of bridging the gap between education and productive employment. Antarang achieves its objectives through its two flagship programs – CareerAware and CareeReady. While CareerAware offers career guidance solutions to students in municipal schools, CareeReady vests underprivileged youth (aged 17-25 years) with core employability skills and links them to employment opportunities in the form of jobs and internships.

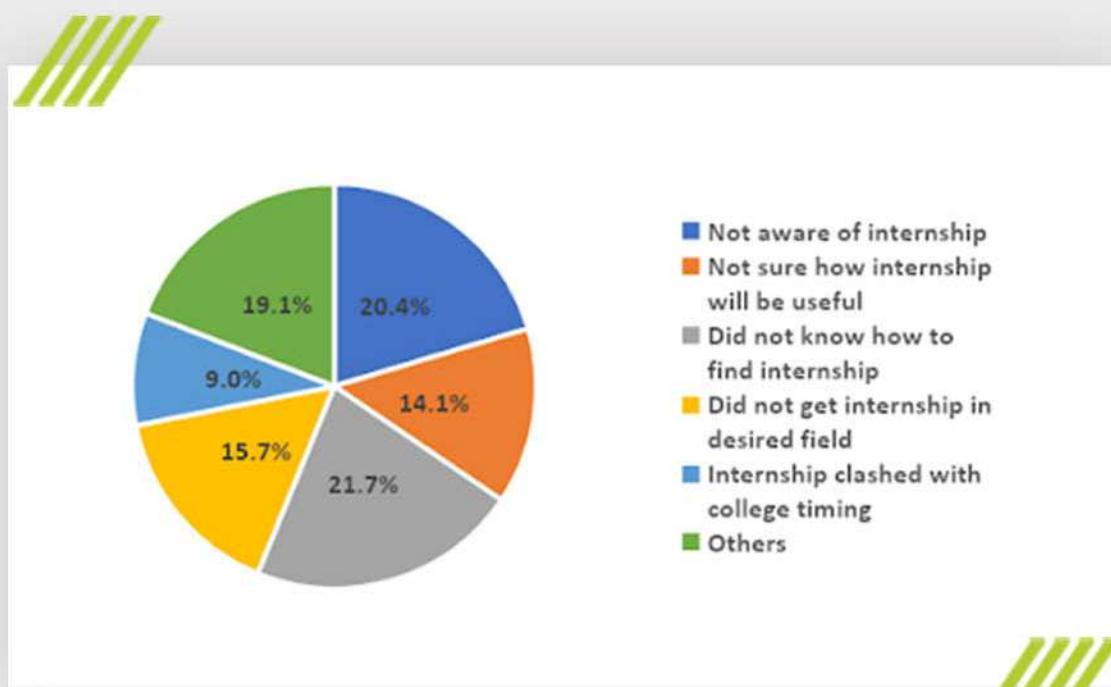
Our long experience in executing career linkages for our students has helped us gain valuable insights about

the functioning of the internship marketplace. Some of our observations have been shared below.

What does the Antarang data and experience say?

a) Low Awareness of internships – a key cause of low uptake

Our youth survey on Internships indicated that close to 20% of the students had not taken up internships as they were unaware of what they entailed, 14% of the students stated that although they had heard about internships, they were unsure about its utility and relevance, close to 22% of the students stated that they did not know how to source an internship opportunity while 16% of the students stated that they did not get internship in their field of interest.



“Awareness about utility of Internships is low in students and is stream dependent. In some courses like BMS awareness improves in the final year as we start emphasizing on the importance of internships with our final year students. In courses like BCA, BCom, BA awareness may vary anywhere between 10%-30%, depending on the awareness programs by colleges. Student mindset is a major roadblock impeding the uptake of internships. Parental support is lacking in many cases as they do not see value in internships, which further compounds the problem”

– Educators, Valia, Kothari and MMP Shah College

“Parents may not support internships as they may not be very confident about allowing their wards to travel large distances for work. Also, colleges do not always discuss internships with parents because of which many parents may not be aware about its utility”

– Parent of CareeReady alumni



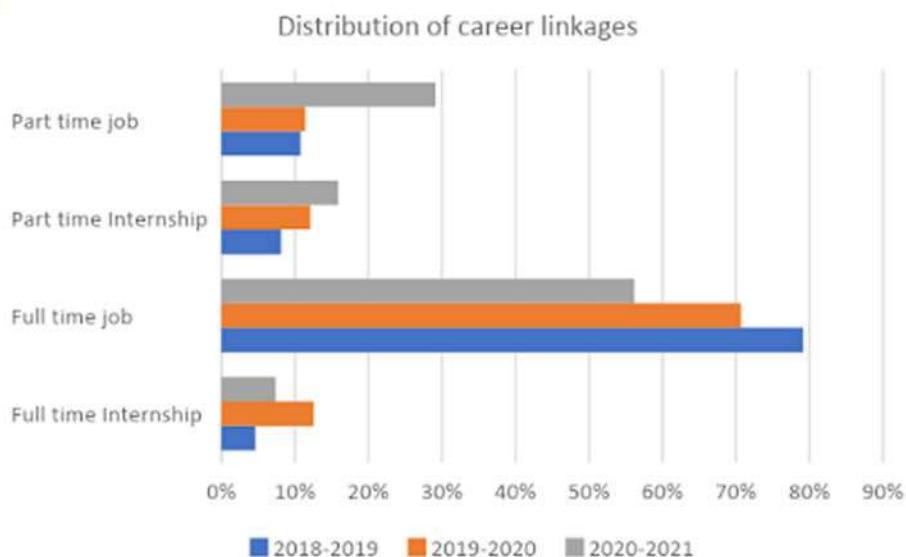
b) Internships are more difficult to source as compared to job linkages

Close to 90% of the employment linkages made by Antarang over the past three years were in full time and part time jobs due to the relative dearth of internship opportunities.



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“The main issue that we face while recruiting interns is that very often, they don’t view internships seriously as a pathway to career as the awareness about its utility is low. Hence, we are choosy when it comes to hiring interns. Also, in case of many corporates, they are wary about hiring interns as they would need to spend on training. Considering that even graduates require substantial training, corporates have apprehension regarding the level of investment that would be required to train undergraduates. They may not view interns as potential investments in human capital”

– Kenznow

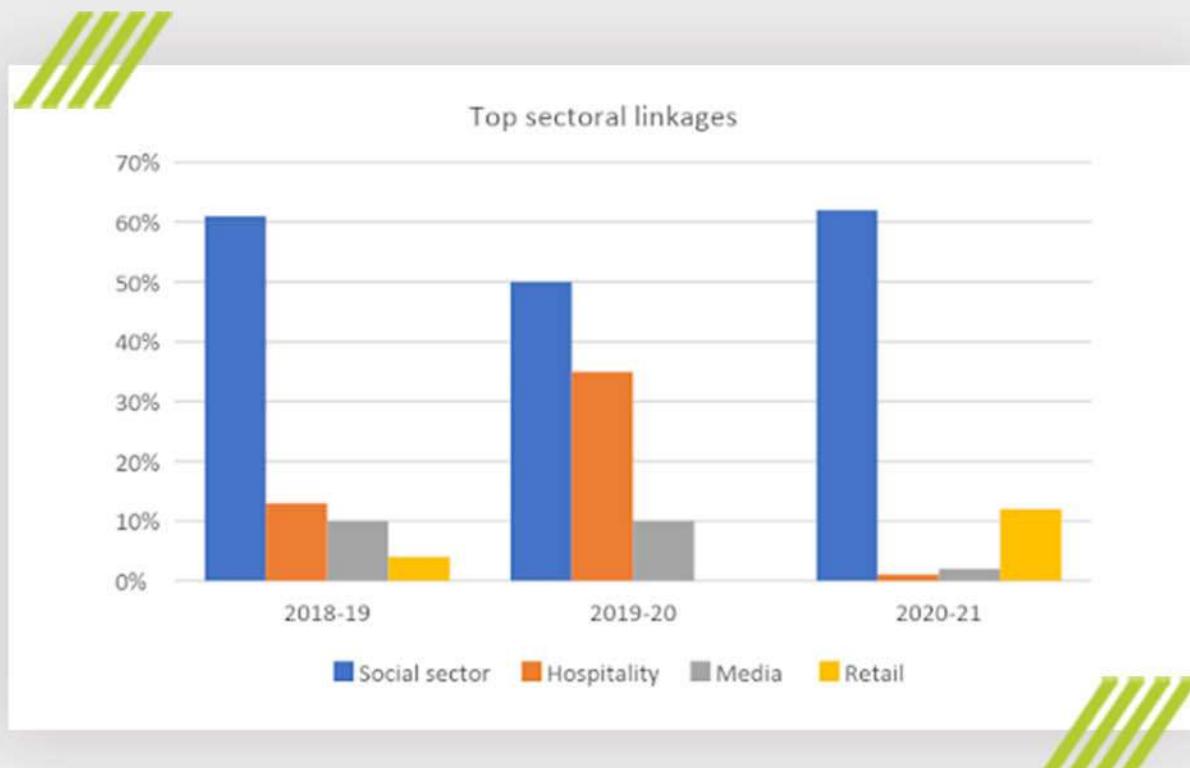
“There is an expectation mismatch when it comes to interns, they do not realise that internship is like any other fulltime job and requires the same dedication and efforts. This is mainly due to the fact that the education system does not train them to take ownership of their careers. This results in lack of corporate interest in hiring interns”

– Official, Unschool*

(*Note: Views expressed are personal as representative of company and do not represent views of the company as a whole)



c) Sectoral concentration on account of limited buy-in from corporates



Social sector, Hospitality, Media and Retail were the top sectors accounting for over 85% of internship linkages by Antarang in each of the past three years.

A point to be noted here is that internship opportunities on platforms such as Internshala and LinkedIn cater largely to the requirements of Management, Engineering and other allied fields where higher education mandates internships. These opportunities therefore do not cater to the universe of career aspirations of youth.

Further, fields such as Management and Engineering may not necessarily witness large scale participation from

less privileged youth, due to their relatively prohibitive course costs, which could further result in narrowing down the internship avenues for this section.

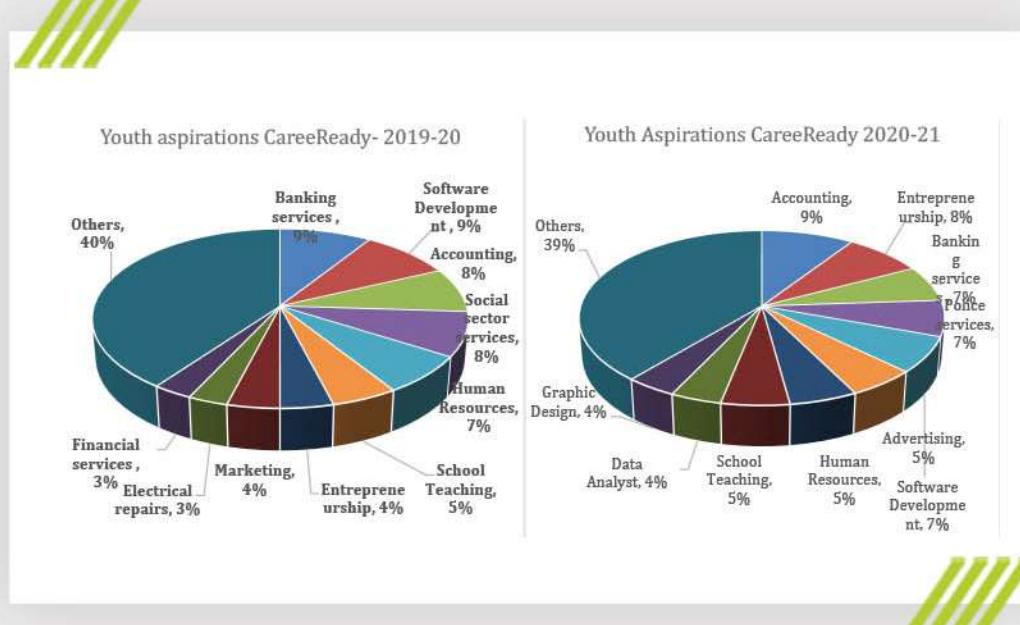
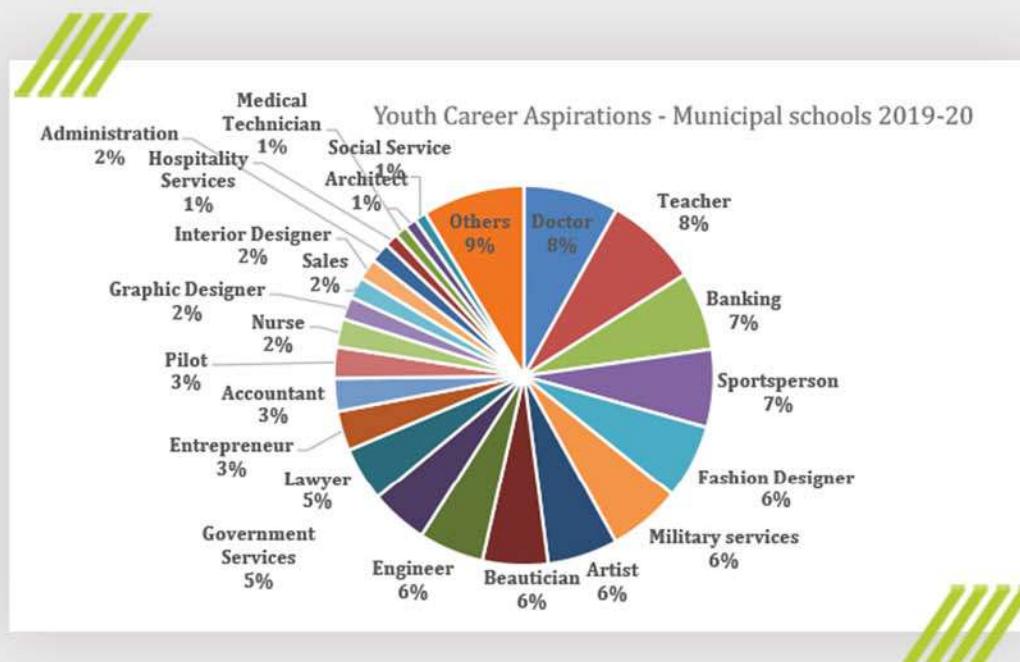
d) Internship opportunities do not cater to youth aspirations

Study of career aspirations of youth participating in CareeReady who have opted for internships, as well a study conducted by Antarang Foundation on career aspirations of tenth standard students across municipal schools in Mumbai and Pune, revealed that while student career aspirations tend to be broad, these do not necessarily correspond to internship opportunities



available in the market today. This is mainly because of the dearth of internship opportunities in the vast majority of the fields. Sectors which have traditionally witnessed a high demand from internship seekers but are characterised by dearth of internship opportunities include Financial services for roles in banking and accounting areas.

The evolution of internships has been largely reflective of the requirements of our education system which has not mandated compulsory internships across streams with equal emphasis.



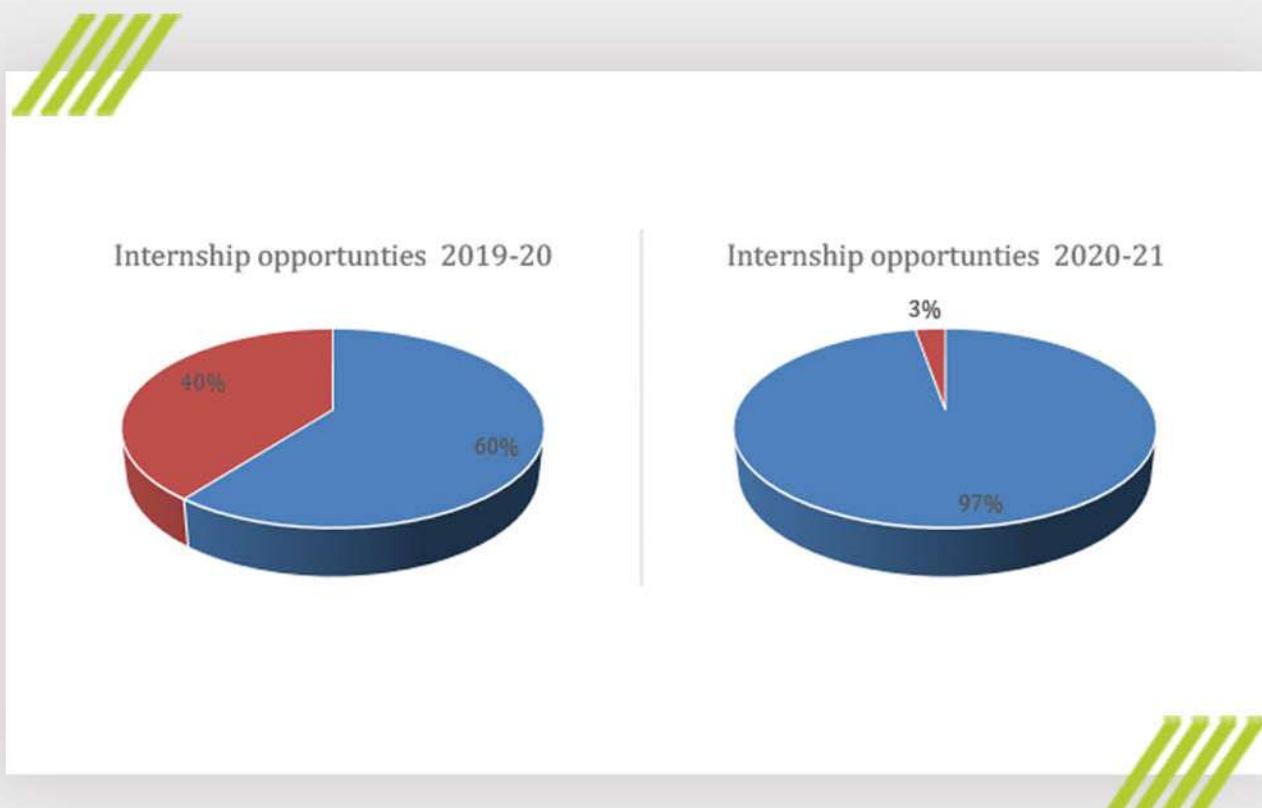


"Internship opportunities do not cater to universe off student aspirations. Most of the internship opportunities prevalent in job market are in the nature of sales and marketing roles, whereas students do not necessarily see themselves taking up careers related to these type of job roles. At times students with poor academic background are also precluded from the internship marketplace due to the emphasis on academic performance"

– Professor, Kothari College



e) Small sized companies can be equal participants to drive future growth in internship opportunities



[Note: Company size: Small -10-50 employees; Medium – 51-500 employees; Large > 500 employees]



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As is evident from Antarang's experience in sourcing internship opportunities for its students, small sized companies can be equal drivers to propel future growth in the internship marketplace. In fact, these companies have the potential to broad-base the internship offerings to students and may be better placed to cater to the diversity in career aspirations of youth. ***Our experience also shows that expectation setting is much easier with smaller companies who tend to be more sensitive to student realities and also do not require any extra effort in comparison to their larger counterparts in terms of handholding and orientation to the internship process.***



“Some of the major impediments that I faced in sourcing internships were around employer expectations about holding a prior work experience, complete career clarity as well as the corporate attitude of viewing interns as unpaid labour. It is perfectly possible for youth my age to be confused about career choices and look upon internships as a career exploration tool”

– Krishnapriya,
CareeReady alumni

f) Companies not very open to the idea of students seeking internships to test drive career choices

Antarang has also observed that corporates very often expect career clarity from their interns as well as have set expectations regarding level of skill requirements. They also very often tend to show preference for candidates with prior work experience. This tends to defeat the very objective of internships serving as a tool to aid career exploration and gaining practical work life exposure. It also precludes a large section of students from seeking internship opportunities.



g) Limited role of educational institutions in fostering internships

Most educators perceive providing internships to be a task which would be beyond the call of their normal duties, in cases where the curriculum does not mandate compulsory internships. As a result, there is limited involvement of colleges in promoting internships. Colleges often do not provide placement support, mentoring or monitor student progress.





“Since internships are not mandatory in many educational streams, there is limited involvement and support of educational institutions to monitor their implementation”

- Official, Unschool*

(*Note: Views expressed are personal as representative of company and do not represent views of the company as a whole)



h) Embedding internship as part of curriculum essential to ensure students do not have to make choices

In educational fields where internships are not mandated, students very often find it difficult to find the time to intern due to a conflict in college and work-place timings. There is no academic or placement support incentive to make the time either. Hence it is very essential to view internships as integral to the educational curriculum in all fields with equal emphasis.

Summary observations – Indian internship landscape

From study of the above demand supply scenario of internship uptake in India, it is clear that:

- Internships show a strong co-relation with employment linkages
- Internships are also emerging as a career exploration tool amongst the students
- Pandemic has catalyzed the demand for virtual internships
- Internship demand in India is mainly driven by those educational sectors which mandate this experience
- Educational streams wherein internships have been recommended as a “good-to-do” practice seem to display low internship uptake therefore making a case for mandating internship experience as an integral part of education system
- Although aggregators have helped in democratizing the availability of internship opportunities, the demand for and supply of internship opportunities seem to be geographically and



sectorally concentrated

- *Internships on offer do not cater to the universe of career aspirations of youth*
- *Lack of awareness about utility of Internships is also one of the key factors impeding the uptake of internships.*
- *Parents do not seem to be aware of the utility of internships both due to the fact that colleges do not necessarily involve parents in internship discussions as well as the fact that internships are not viewed as essential component of education*
- *Despite this, demand for internships far outstrips the supply of internships on offer*
- *Corporate hesitancy to offer internship opportunities partly stems from their unsureness about the skills and ability of youth to measure upto job requirements. Inadequacy of our higher educational system to equip and support the transition of youth to employment has been cited as one of the key reasons by corporates for their apprehensions about the skills of the youth emerging from our colleges. Corporates also seem to display reluctance in investing in training of youth and do not seem to view internships as a potential source of hiring talent.*



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CATALYSING INTERNSHIPS IN INDIA

Internships act as a bridge between education and employment by helping translate and apply the theoretical understanding of concepts studied in the classroom in a real-work setting. Internships not related to a career of choice still have the potential to develop transversal skills among candidates as well as aid in making informed career choices through career exploration. Further, internships have also shown the ability to shorten the time to an employment linkage.

Juxtaposing the critical role that internships have to play in buttressing the education to employment journey of a youth, with the dismally low awareness and uptake of internships in our country, it is rather evident that much needs to be done to catalyze the uptake of internships in India.

Considering the breadth of the problem at hand, and also the fact that services such as career counselling, core employability skills training, provision of internship opportunities, post placement support etc. are all



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equally relevant for aiding the education to employment transition of a youth, there is a need to arrive at a composite solution which can address youth employability needs in a holistic manner. Further, action will need to be initiated in a manner such that a systemic change becomes possible and the resultant solution becomes accessible to every youth in the country.

In a large way, the broad contours of this solution have already been outlined out by the Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion program (EQUIP, 2019-2024) document which lays down a five-year vision plan for comprehensive re-hauling of India's higher education system as well as making it more relevant by improving

the employability of the students passing out of higher education. The strategy proposed by us tries to build upon the EQUIP vision and attempts to suggest practical pathways for actualizing the same.

Based on our stakeholder interactions, Antarang's own experience in executing internship programs for its CareeReady students as well as study of the secondary data on demand/supply of internship opportunities in India, we make the following recommendations to improve the uptake of internships in our country. **The recommendations factor in the role that could be played by each of the key stakeholders who have the potential to influence the growth of the internship ecosystem.**

Key Stakeholders and the roles that they could potentially play:

<i>Central Government</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Changes in educational framework to make a case for internships● Changes in corporate laws to mandate provision of internships
<i>State Government</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop the necessary infrastructure through a Hub and Spoke model to provide employability related services to youth. The Hub is expected to be carved out of Government machinery and is envisaged to support the spoke activities through ToT function and aggregation of internship opportunities
<i>Educational Institutions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Schools and colleges would act as Spokes and facilitate career counselling and employability skills training of the students and arrange for internship connects with the help of the hub
<i>Industry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provision of internship opportunities



Key Activities recommended to be undertaken by the Stakeholders

1. Central Level Initiative

Possible initiatives by Ministry of Education

i. Internships to be made mandatory:

In line with the **EQUIP vision** as well as the **NEP intent**, we recommend internships be made mandatory across streams.

We have seen that internships are most popular in streams where they have been compulsorily mandated. **The AICTE policy on internship is a case in point which has successfully contributed to popularizing the concept of internship across engineering and management streams.** The UGC guidelines on internships on other hand are more recommendatory in nature and hence do not see uniformity in level of implementation by institutions governed by it.

ii. Curriculum changes to enable internships

- Develop a uniform curriculum for career counselling and employability skills training: Internships cannot work in a vacuum and need to be preceded by appropriate career counselling and

core employability skills training. Unless youth have some clarity about career choices, they may find it difficult to pick the right internships to gain necessary work exposure. Besides, core employability skills training is extremely vital to negotiate a work life setting. Our interactions with youth as well as educators and corporates show that youth are not able to succeed in getting an internship linkage in the absence of career clarity and lack of relevant skills. **The National Education Policy, 2020** strongly advocates for provision of career counselling in schools.

Accordingly, the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)** and **State Curriculum Framework (SCF)** need to clearly provide for provision of both career counselling and core employability skills training at the higher secondary level. The frameworks need to define the approach/methodology to implement career counselling and employability skills training to students. A similar approach may be adopted in higher educational courses by supervisory bodies such as **UGC** and **AICTE** to integrate core employability skills training.

- Define broad guidelines to include internships as part of the curriculum design: Both the NCF and SCF need to lay down broad directives on designing the educational content of internships by identifying the learning outcomes.



Internships need to be designed to empower students with a combination of core employability skills as well as technical skills related to the concerned subject/stream. Industry relevance needs to be factored in while structuring the internship content. An existing example is the PMKVY which draws upon industry expertise via the Sector Skills Councils while designing technical skilling courses.

iii. Define SOPs/guidelines for educational institutions for implementation of internships:

SOPs/Guidelines need to be framed by appropriate regulatory bodies such as School Boards at National and State level for guiding implementation of internships by higher secondary schools/junior colleges. This is essential to drive credibility. This is similar to the AICTE guidelines and UGC guidelines that govern the implementation of internships in technical and higher educational institutions.

Some of the clauses which could be included in these guidelines could be regarding

a) Building awareness of internships: This is very vital to create a buy-in by students. Awareness campaigns would also need to target parents through mechanisms such as the School Management Committees/Parent

Teacher Associations.

b) Guidance on imparting career counselling, employability skills training and sourcing/identification of internship opportunities: Educational institutions could obtain training on career counselling, employability skills curriculum as well as source internship opportunities through the Hub structure created by the State.

c) Creation of suitable support structure for students to take up internships: This could be in the form of placement support, career counselling, employability skills training, interview preparation, identification of internship opportunities and creation of peer group support structures.

d) Guidance on co-designing internships along with the industry partners such as defining the job description, timelines, supervision and learning outcomes

e) Guidance on monitoring the internship including mentoring support

f) Guidance on measuring academic credits attributable to internships Besides, guidelines at the Higher Educational level could also possibly look at some modifications, especially around creating early awareness of



internships to ensure that students are adequately invested in the process and view internships as a gateway to employment, as well as creation of peer group support structures if required.

Example of best practice followed by Asst. Professor, MMP Shah College:

- For creating early awareness of internships:***

Although actual field work (one month teaching internship) is supposed to done by students in third semester as part of the curriculum requirement, the ground work for the same is started in the first semester itself, with adequate understanding of theoretical concepts as well as practical training being imparted within the ambit of the classroom itself. The students are familiarized with the concept of internship from the first semester itself.

- For creation of placement support system:***

The concerned educator here, focuses purely on preparing and guiding her students for seeking internship opportunities but stops short of actually connecting them to one. The students, who are basically girls from low-income background are grouped together such that they form a peer support system. The groups are

formed on the basis of geographical proximity of the student's place of residence. They are then encouraged to identify and approach schools in the vicinity of their homes for completing their one-month teaching field work. The central idea behind this strategy is basically to let the students experience the grind and hard work required to source a career opportunity and thereby prepare them for the job market. Once the students get connected to a school, the concerned educator frames the objectives that are expected to be achieved through the internship assignment. While the actual job/task on hand could be defined by the school wherein the internship is being done, the task is mapped against fulfilment of these objectives. The students are then required to submit videos/photographs of their daily tasks on the student Whatsapp group along with narrative of the work done. The concerned educator also conducts field visits to watch the students in action. At the end of the assignment, students are required to submit a project file along with assessment report by the school. The concerned educator then grades the student on the internship assignment basis, their submissions, her field inspection as well as the assessment by the school.



iv. Higher weightage for placement linkages in assessment of Higher Education Institutions:

The assessment framework for rating Higher Educational institutions (HEIs) i.e. the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) framework at present assigns limited weightage to parameters such as “student progression” (which measures ability of the institution to support their student’s transition into employment/higher education) and “student mentoring” (which measures institution’s ability to support its students through facilitating mechanisms such as placement cell, guidance cell etc). Considering that HEIs need to serve as a preparatory ground for aiding student transition into employment which could include internships, higher weightages may be assigned to transition parameters to goad action in this direction.

Possible initiatives by Ministry of Corporate Affairs

v. Changes in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) laws:

At present CSR laws permit expenditure on employment enhancing vocational skills as an allowable CSR expenditure. We strongly recommend any expenditure incurred on in-house training of interns as well as internship stipends be allowed to be considered as CSR.

This would encourage corporates in investing in training of youth and incentivise them to hire interns. This has precedence - as per Ministry of Corporate Affairs directive, expenses incurred on apprenticeship training and stipends is permissible expenditure under CSR subject to fulfilment of certain conditions.

Possible initiatives by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

vi. Mandating internship offerings by corporates:

Presently corporates having an employee strength of more than 30, are expected to hire apprentices at a minimum of 2.5% of their total manpower strength. A similar mandate needs to be introduced to encourage industry to hire interns. Alternately, intern hiring may be clubbed along with apprentice hiring for the purpose of computation of target achievement.

vii. Guidance to corporates:

The Apprenticeship Act, 1961 contains directives to corporates to execute the apprenticeship arrangements such as the requirement to enter into an apprenticeship contract, obligation to impart basic and practical training to apprentices, payment of stipend etc. Some provisions could also be folded into the





Apprenticeship Act itself to guide corporates on executing internship programs. These directives could cover recommendations on co-designing and monitoring the internship arrangements along with the educational institutions on similar lines as the AICTE and UGC guidelines on implementation of internship. This would help in enlisting a stronger role of corporates in execution of the internship arrangements.

[The AICTE guidelines on Internship contains recommendations to industry on designing the internship plan through clear definition of the job description, internship schedule and expected learning outcomes, tips on orientation, supervision and feedback to interns etc. Similarly, the UGC guidelines on Apprenticeship / Internship also contain suggestions to industry for monitoring the intern progress and assessment, designing of the apprenticeship / internship embedded degree programs.]

viii. Development of a digital portal for aggregating internship opportunities:

In order to service young people's career needs across the lifecycle and to ensure seamless transition from education to employment, the NCS platform could be modified to offer certain additional functionalities. Some of these features could include a psychometric testing and career guidance component, matching engine which would map the candidates' aspirations and skills to suggest suitable internship opportunities, post-placement support to seekers in form of mentor connects and industry exposure opportunities. Besides recruiters, educational institutions could also have institutional access to post internship requirements on NCS portal on same lines as proposed in the SHREYAS scheme for apprenticeship promotion. **Creation of a national internship portal draws parallel with the EQUIP vision for creation of a national internship platform.**



2. State Level Initiatives

Considering that Education is a concurrent subject, States have an extremely crucial role in executing the NEP vision to embed internships within the education system. In fact, it is the States that can ensure last mile connectivity and ensure equitable distribution of services to support the education to employment transition of youth.

Keeping in mind the need to ensure scalability, inclusivity, and replicability, the proposed structure that could be set up at State level is envisaged as a School to Work Transition (STWT) intervention with a Hub and Spoke design.

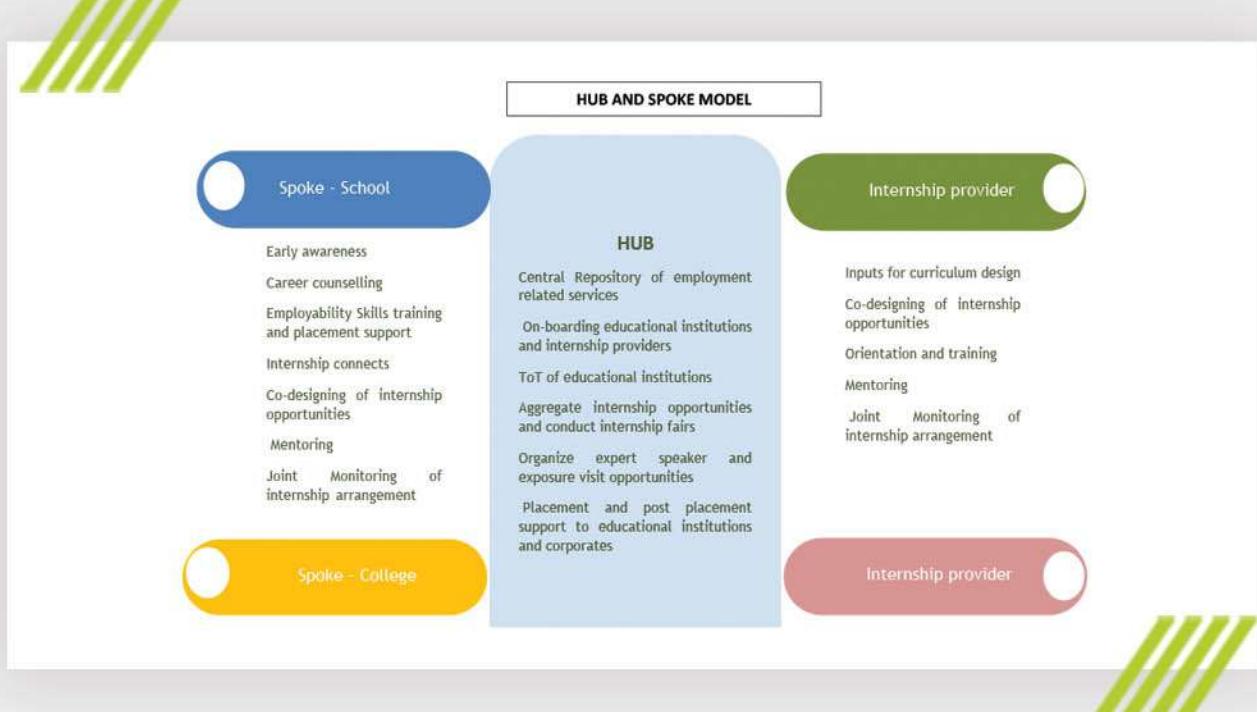
The Hub and Spoke structure is envisioned as a one stop shop providing holistic solutions to meet youth employability needs. Services such as career counselling, employability skills training, provision of internship opportunities and mentor connections are all equally relevant for aiding the education to employment journey of a youth and need to be viewed in an integrated manner as part of a composite solution answering youth's though-the-cycle (from career guidance to post-placement support) employability needs.

The Hub is expected to be the driving force laying out the implementation strategies, making arrangements for student counselling and training through the Spoke, sourcing internships, facilitating partner connects, and building capacities of the Spokes. The Spokes will be critical in executing ground level activities for delivering employability related solutions to students.

The Hub and Spoke structure draws support from concept of the School Complex/Cluster as envisioned by the NEP well as the concept of a professionally run Centre for Employment & Entrepreneurship as proposed by EQUIP guidelines.

We recommend the setting up of a Technical Support Unit (TSU) under the Department of Education at the State Level comprising State Education Department, SCERT and MSDE officials, along with experts and youth. The TSU would then be tasked with overseeing the formulation of the SOPs and Guidelines of the Hub and Spoke Model.





Location of Hub and Spoke structure:

The proposed initiative is expected to be anchored by individual State Governments, who will then take up the responsibility to institute Hubs within every Education Cluster as envisioned by the NEP. The secondary schools and colleges within the cluster would operate as the Spokes of the model delivering an integrated career readiness curriculum to their students and enabling internship connects through the Hub.

Initiatives recommended to be undertaken at Hub and Spoke centres are listed below:

[A] Activities to be undertaken by Hubs

i. Formalisation of the Hub and Spoke teams: The Hub team is

envisioned to be carved out of the Government machinery with the staffing as envisaged by the NEP cluster recommendations. The staff could comprise one-two counsellors and a coordinator to source and aggregate internship and career exposure opportunities. The Spoke team would comprise educators from secondary schools and colleges.

ii. Standardisation of processes: Standard operating processes (SOPs) would need to be laid down to streamline the functioning of both the Hub and Spoke. This would include laying down of SOPs for activities pertaining to marketing and outreach, career counselling, training, internship fairs, partner on-boarding, internship linkages, and organising expert speaker and exposure visit opportunities for the education



institutions who are part of the cluster.

iii. Training of trainers: The facilitator team at Hub would first need to be trained in the career counselling and employability skills curriculum as laid down by the SCERT in line with the curriculum developed by the NCERT, so that they could in turn conduct the training of the Spoke members.

iv. Awareness drives: The Hub would need to conduct awareness drives at various levels to bring together all the relevant stakeholders in the employment ecosystem. Accordingly, following set of activities will need to be executed to bring on-board these stakeholders:



a) Internship providers – The hub would require to liaison with various industry level associations, Sector Skill Councils as well as Third Party Aggregators apart from making direct calls and visits to corporate houses for creating awareness of the Hub's activities. A communication strategy

that emphasises the benefits that can accrue to corporates through hiring of interns vis-à-vis cost efficiencies, scale efficiencies, provision of an avenue to assess and spot talent will be developed and customised for use at every hub.

b) Educational institutions: Awareness drives will need to be undertaken to familiarise educational institutions about the service offerings of the Hub. The Hub could target forums such as School Management Committees / Parent Teachers Associations to create awareness of the Hub activities.

c) Mentors: As part of the corporate engagement strategy, working professionals from the corporate internship partners empanelled with the Hub, could be enlisted as Mentors on the NCS platform. Orientation sessions would be conducted with these Mentors for sensitizing them to the needs of youth including issues related to gender, socio economic backgrounds of the candidates.

v. Aggregation of Internship opportunities: The Hub will aggregate internship opportunities from local businesses, list available skilling opportunities in the area and also aggregate expert speaker and exposure visit opportunities that students could avail of. We recommend that the data on



internships and career exposure opportunities is updated on the NCS portal itself. This has a twofold advantage of ensuring local level robustness to the NCS and building familiarity of the NCS with students. The Hub could also organise internship fairs for the benefit of the educational institutions forming part of the cluster.

vi. Services for internship providers:

Access to student data and training support: Internship providers could reach out to Hubs both for seeking data on internship applicants as well as support for training their recruits

Feedback and improvement: A standardized survey could be delivered to each employer that hires a candidate after a certain window of time to gauge success of the placement, retention, the candidate's performance, and challenges faced by the employer. These insights could be used to improve and adapt the intervention

[B] Activities at Spoke level:

The Spokes would be responsible for delivering career counselling, employability skills training and internship linkages through execution of the following activities:

a) Conducting annual career weeks:

Career weeks could be conducted in local secondary schools and colleges

for the purpose creating early awareness of internships. These career weeks would involve career guidance and counselling sessions, awareness campaigns on internships, industry exposure sessions, talks by industry experts and professional development trainings. Parents would also be invited to such sessions to enlist their support for internships.

b) Pre-placement support: The Spokes would be primarily responsible for rendering these services under the guidance and support of the Hub. Some of the key features of these activities include:

● Career guidance and Counselling

- An assessment of the candidates' interests, aptitudes, personality and realities through a standardised guided intervention would act as necessary prerequisite to internship placements. The realities component refers to the family, financial and job realities which students need to factor in making career choices. Basis the results of the above psychometric testing, the candidates could be counselled on the career next steps as well as identifying skill gaps.

- Group counselling sessions could be held to create a support system for youth; especially for young women to navigate specific challenges.



● Trainings

- **Employability skills training:** The students would undergo employability skills training under a standardised curriculum that would be conducted at the Spoke itself.
- **Vocational Training:** Basis the skill gap assessments candidates could be referred to the technical skills providers, the list of which could be obtained from the Hub

● Internship connects:

Internship connects would be offered to the internship seekers through the NCS platform basis the data uploaded by Hubs

● Conducting Internship Fairs:

Activities at the internship fairs could include psychometric testing and skill gap assessment, dissemination of information on skill building avenues in case of skill gaps if any. If the candidates are found internship ready basis the skill gap assessments, they would be linked to suitable internship opportunities through the NCS platform. In the event of an employer with matching candidate requirements, has participated in the Internship Fair, the internship-seeker could be lined up for an immediate interview.

Alternately, internship fairs could also be conducted by the Hub for the benefit of the educational institutions operating within the cluster

- **Co-designing of internship arrangements:** The Spokes would be responsible for co-designing the internship arrangements vis-à-vis achievement of the learning outcomes along with the internship providers

c) Post-placement support

-Monitoring the internship arrangements: The Spokes would be responsible for jointly monitoring the successful conclusion of the internship arrangements along with the internship providers. A point of connect from the Spoke team could be appointed for coordinating with the internship provider as well as the guiding the intern through the internship period.

-Mentoring support: The first-time internship seekers would also be linked to Mentors who have enlisted themselves on the NCS/State level platforms. These mentors are expected to be working professionals who have volunteered to guide the first-time internship seekers in their work-life transition for a fixed period of time - six months to a year. The same is expected to emerge as an effective post placement support for the candidates

-Access to continued learning opportunities: These could be made available through conducting career related workshops.



d) Co-ordination with Hub: The spokes would be responsible for co-ordinating with Hubs for advice and resources for various services such as career counselling, employability skills training, internship and mentor connects.

Critical Success Factors of the Hub and Spoke Model

Given that the proposed Hub and spoke model seeks to realign some of the existing strategies to tackle the education to employment gap, and at the same time seeks to target both depth and breadth of implementation, its success is contingent to number of critical factors some which have been listed below:

- Integrating internships as part of the curriculum in higher secondary as well as higher education in line with the mandate of aligning with employability as per the NEP 2020
- Obtaining buy-in and on-boarding of government bodies at all levels as well as other stakeholders in the employment ecosystem through advocacy measures, awareness campaigns, counselling sessions to ensure understanding of the objectives and functioning of the proposed structure



- Adoption of a collaborative approach between education and industry ecosystem
- Adoption of digital technology coupled with standardization of processes to ensure scale and replication
- The availability of suitable physical infrastructure at Hub and Spoke levels- especially digital infrastructure in schools and colleges
- Quality and experience of staff at Hub and Spoke levels.



- Ensuring operational flexibility based on local employability context and beneficiary needs
- Availability of suitable employment and training opportunities especially in the rural context



A careful examination of the solution proposed above makes it amply clear that the intention is neither to duplicate any of the initiatives undertaken either by the Central or State level government schemes, nor involve radical overhauling of the existing infrastructure created for the purpose of aiding the education to employment transition of youth; but rather focus on improving last mile connectivity and outreach of these initiatives through higher touch points and awareness campaigns, while at the same time folding in internships as part pf high school and higher education curriculum along with provision of internship avenues and post placement support through the existing platforms.



Conclusion

Research studies conducted world-wide on measuring the benefits of internship show that internships play a vital role in shaping the education to employment transition of youth. Internships not only vest youth with crucial employability skills but also aid in career exploration, and reduction in the duration of job search. In fact, Antarang's experience in executing internship connections for its CareeReady graduates has helped us appreciate internships as a critical tool to bridge the opportunity gap for underserved youth.

Despite the critical role that internships play in improving the employment prospects of youth, they are yet to gain due recognition and acceptance in our country. To remedy this situation a concerted and collaborative effort will need to be made by all the stakeholders which would involve action by government agencies, educational institutions as well as the industry. Some of the critical changes that could be implemented include mandating of internships across educational streams, equating/extending some of the legal provisions surrounding apprenticeships to internships, ensuring widespread awareness about the utility of internships and last mile

extension of support services to meet the employability needs of youth.

A point to be kept in mind is that a youth's journey from education to employment needs to be supported by a host of integrated measures beginning with career counselling, vesting of core employability and technical skills, internship connections and post placement support. Internships will therefore need to be executed in tandem with other measures as a part of the composite solution servicing youth's employability needs.

The focus so far has been on achieving 100 per cent literacy in the country, this now needs to shift to achieving 100% employability!



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