Community Engagement (CE) in Higher Education Institutions: Indian Perspective

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Study Background

- Carried out in association with British Council, India, in 2013-15
- Broad idea of mapping the state-of-the-art practices in the field of CE in Indian HEIs
- Punjab, Bengal, Assam and Karnataka covered
- Efforts aimed at spreading the idea of community engagement, generating awareness on the issue
### Mapping details

<table>
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<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>HOST UNIVERSITIES</th>
<th>INSTRUMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mapping CUE Initiatives in India</td>
<td>• Punjab University</td>
<td>• Surveys</td>
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<td>• Understanding perceptions, attitudes towards social responsibility of HEIs</td>
<td>• North Bengal University</td>
<td>• Interviews</td>
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<td>• IIT-G</td>
<td>• Dialogues</td>
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<td>• Jain University</td>
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Key Features: PUNJAB

Action Projects

- Executed in association with communities
- Centre for Social Studies, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension

Adoption of villages

- Efforts to build skill sets/capacities of communities
- Extensive knowledge sharing initiatives
Key Features: BENGAL

Joint initiatives for promotion of horticulture
- Initiative of COFAM, DBT, NBU
- Collaborates with communities, uses indigenous knowledge, builds capacities

Initiative of Christian colleges
- Pursuing extensive community engagement
- Part of their broad mission statement
- Capacity building, social outreach

Joint Agri-researching
- Carried out by Agricultural Universities
- Research carried out in participatory mode
Key Features: ASSAM

Student initiated projects
- Part of service-learning, application of knowledge in the field
- Ensuring well being of the communities

Novel & innovative courses
- Programme on Peace & Conflict Studies
- Course on literacy & language education

Community Radio
- Nodal initiative of Gauhati University
- Provides an open forum for discussion of social issues
Key Features: KARNATAKA

Tripartite approach of RadioActive
- Integrates Participatory Research, Citizen Engagement & Community Voice
- Serves as popular activist space

Practitioners as Teachers
- Social work activists, folk artists invited as lecturers in HEIs
- Also function as Adjunct faculty in some colleges

Partnership with local CSOs
- JU associates with Bala Janagraha, Kadam Foundation
- CSOs also partner with RadioActive
Emerging trends

• Ambiguity on ‘community’ and ‘community engagement’
• Institutional impediments: Structural fallacies, rigid pedagogy
• Limited capacities of the community to engage
• Absence of synergy between the academia and community
• Lack of liasoning between different stakeholders
• Resource constraints: Lack of finances, shortage of manpower
Ways forward

• Need to chalk out a clear vision on community engagement
• Alignment of institutional policies & practices in favour of CE
• Advocacy at various platforms, coordination between various stakeholders
• Developing sensitivities with respect to community needs and aspirations
• Tremendous opportunities under the new UGC Scheme
Thank You