
Promotion of Graduate Employability: Roles of Academic Institutions**Prof. M.C. Reddeppa Reddy¹**DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23097065>**Review: 30/08/2026****Acceptance: 04/09/2026****Publication: 02/10/2026****Abstract:**

Graduate employability has become a major concern for higher education institutions, policy makers, employers and students in India. Although access to higher education has expanded, many graduates continue to face difficulties in securing suitable employment due to gaps between academic learning and the knowledge, skills, attitudes and practical competencies required by the labour market. This paper examines the role of academic institutions in promoting graduate employability through a descriptive and analytical approach based on secondary sources, reports and relevant literature. It argues that colleges and universities must move beyond conventional classroom instruction and adopt an integrated institutional approach to employability development. Such an approach includes providing adequate infrastructure, imparting quality and practical education, integrating skill-based learning into the curriculum, using innovative methods and technologies, encouraging learning while earning, developing linkages with employers, strengthening alumni networks, establishing counselling and placement services, and using academic libraries as career information centres. The paper also highlights the role of academic departments and the responsibility of students in developing communication, problem-solving, teamwork, technological, personality and job-seeking skills. It concludes that graduate employability should be treated as a shared responsibility of higher education institutions, teachers, libraries, employers, alumni, placement cells and students.

Keywords: Higher Education; Graduate Employability; Academic Institutions; Lifelong Learning; Skill Development; Career Guidance.

1.0 Introduction

Employability of students is a crucial issue for the Government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. Every year, a large number of graduate students pass out from academic institutions, but many of them are unable to secure suitable jobs. The Ministry of Labour, Government of India, has reported that less than one out of four MBAs, one out of five engineers and one out of ten graduates are able to obtain employment. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) indicated that only 10 per cent of MBA graduates and 17 per cent of engineering graduates secured employment during the period 2012–2014. Industry leaders

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have also observed that only a limited proportion of graduates coming out of educational institutions are employment-ready.

Aspiring Minds' National Employability Report (2014), based on the AMCAT (Aspiring Minds Computer Adaptive Test) test administered to over 150,000 graduates, concluded that 47 per cent of graduates were not employable in any sector due to a significant gap between the education imparted in colleges and the talents and abilities demanded by industry. According to Santosh Mehrotra and Jajati K. Parida, employment in India among educated youth decreased to 465 million in 2017–18 from 474 million in 2011–12, while the unemployment rate increased to 8.8 per cent in 2017–18 from 3 per cent in 2011–12. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in a report published in 2018, projected India's unemployment to rise from 18.3 million in 2017 to 18.6 million in 2018, with the rate remaining steady at 3.5 per cent. These figures indicate that graduate employability continues to be a significant educational and developmental concern.

Recent statistics cited by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII, 2025) show a shift in the employability landscape, indicating improvement in selected professional courses such as management and engineering. The overall national employability rate has also shown improvement compared to earlier years. This improvement is attributed to factors such as the evolution of business and engineering education, incorporation of artificial intelligence, data-oriented skills, essential soft skills and industry collaboration. However, it is important to note that an increase in educational attainment does not automatically ensure appropriate employment. Possessing technical education by itself does not guarantee prospective employment. Many graduates and postgraduates who are looking for employment continue to lack employability skills, practical exposure and industry-aligned competencies. Some are employed in jobs of low quality, work long hours for low wages, or receive only short-term or informal employment arrangements. Therefore, the employability challenge must be viewed not only as a labour-market concern, but also as a higher education concern.

As Kim (2001) argues, actions at the highest organisational level have the greatest potential to effect transformational change. In developing strategies for graduate employability, meaningful change will not occur unless stakeholders articulate, explore and align their mental models, and then develop a shared vision with goals and priorities to focus collective effort. Employability development is a shared challenge, and shared solutions should therefore become a logical first step. In India, the major stakeholders in promoting graduate employability include the Government, academic institutions in the public and private sectors, industrial bodies, employer associations and private training providers.

Keeping this in view, the present paper identifies the roles of academic institutions such as colleges and universities in making students employable by providing good infrastructure facilities, improving the quality of education, integrating employability skills, and strengthening institutional support systems. The paper also discusses the roles of academic departments, libraries, counselling and placement services, employer linkages,

alumni networks and students themselves in promoting graduate employability. The central argument of this paper is that graduate employability cannot be achieved through academic qualifications alone. It requires a coordinated institutional approach in which curriculum, teaching methods, practical learning, career guidance, employer linkages, placement services, libraries and student responsibility are brought together. Academic institutions therefore have a direct role in preparing graduates not only for examinations, but also for meaningful participation in the world of work.

1.1 Methodology adopted

This paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. It is based on a review of secondary sources, employability-related reports, academic literature and the author's reflections on higher education, career guidance and skill development. The discussion is organised thematically around the roles of academic institutions, academic departments, libraries and students in promoting graduate employability. The paper does not present a primary empirical survey; rather, it synthesises existing evidence and institutional practices to identify the responsibilities of higher education institutions in strengthening graduate employability.

2.0 Roles and Functions of Academic Institutions in Promoting Graduate Employability

All educational institutions, both rural and urban, should initiate suitable action to make graduate students employable irrespective of location, caste and gender. Basically, institutions have to provide essential infrastructure facilities such as classrooms, suitable furniture, well-equipped laboratories and trained teachers as per the norms of the respective affiliating bodies. They should design relevant and job-oriented courses, or modify existing courses, to improve the employment prospects of admitted students after completion of their programmes. Courses can be made more effective by integrating career education into the curriculum. Teachers and trainers must also use innovative methods and modern technologies to make learning easier, more participatory and more effective.

Educational institutions can develop linkages with prospective employers and companies in the surrounding area by inviting them to participate in academic sessions and provide hands-on experience. Providing work opportunities to students while they learn helps them apply theoretical knowledge, develop work skills, build good habits and choose desired careers. Institutions must provide space for demonstrating students' talents and skills in extra-curricular activities such as sports, games, drawing, music, dance and drama. Institutions can maintain alumni information and use alumni relationships to secure apprenticeships, internships and placement opportunities for prospective students. They must also create placement cells and make systematic efforts to connect successful students with employers by organising job melas, campus recruitment and career guidance programmes. To make placement cells dynamic, institutions must appoint qualified and enthusiastic teachers or professionals as placement officers.

To elaborate the above functions, the following roles and strategies of educational institutions and their managements are discussed in this section: equipping the institution with good infrastructure facilities; imparting quality and practical education to secure employment; integrating skill areas into the curriculum and instructional modules; using innovative methods, strategies and technologies; encouraging the concept of learning while earning; developing direct relationships with prospective employers and companies; encouraging teachers and students to share their inventions and initiatives; strengthening alumni relations; conducting sports and recreational activities; and establishing or strengthening counselling and placement services.

2.1 Equip the Institution with Good Infrastructure Facilities

Educational institutions and managements are expected to provide classrooms, laboratories, trained and qualified teachers, playgrounds, furniture and equipment, library and information services, computer laboratories, Wi-Fi and other facilities required to impart quality education in the chosen courses. Managements have to recruit qualified, trained and competent staff in sufficient numbers. They should also provide facilities for yoga, meditation, art and culture, and spaces for exhibiting student talents. Career guidance and counselling cells, placement cells with qualified placement officers, sports facilities and library services with adequate books, journals and periodicals are also important. In addition, institutions have to establish relationships with employers and industries for internships, apprenticeships and work-exposure opportunities.

Institutions should also communicate their available infrastructure facilities, the courses they offer, the methodologies they adopt, employment opportunities available to their students, and the linkages they maintain with prospective employers and companies. Such transparent communication can help students and parents make informed decisions and can also strengthen the institution's public credibility.

2.2 Impart Quality and Practical Education to Secure Employment

Imparting quality and practical education requires a multi-faceted approach. It includes investment in good infrastructure, inclusive and engaging learning environments, updated resources and innovative teaching methods such as collaborative and inquiry-based learning. Educational institutions have to improve the employability skills of their students through classroom teaching, integration of skill areas into the syllabus, project work, extra-curricular activities, internships, career guidance services, placement training and placement services. To make these services effective, managements must provide the necessary infrastructure, quality teaching, practical experiences and placement opportunities.

Teachers have to equip students with the knowledge, skills and capabilities required to face competition in the global market. They must understand students' needs, interests, abilities and aptitudes, and assist them in channelising their energies towards the achievement of their goals. They should be available to guide and support students in choosing suitable careers and achieving their career objectives. Teachers can also coordinate career

guidance activities such as counselling, internships, apprenticeships, monitoring and evaluation of students' progress.

Student-centric methods are important in both theory and practice. Motivational speeches, brief lectures and discussions can be used to impart theoretical understanding, while workshops, seminars, demonstrations, experiments, apprenticeships, internships and project work can provide practical experience. Such methods facilitate the acquisition of job-specific skills and improve students' capacity to secure employment. Apprentices and interns acquire job-related skills by observing and learning from experienced practitioners. Therefore, quality apprenticeships are essential for facilitating students to develop employment-related competencies.

2.3 Integrate Skill Areas into the Curriculum and Instructional Modules

There is a need to build career education into the curriculum as an integral component. Such integration can help students understand their interests, talents and aspirations and make better subject and career choices. The curriculum should promote employability through discipline-specific knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as through non-discipline-specific skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, digital literacy and adaptability. If the curriculum does not reflect the demands of industry or keep pace with rapidly changing times, students may not acquire the competencies required by employers.

Students must be trained in both discipline-specific and generic skill areas required for employability. Curricular activities should therefore take students beyond the classroom through projects, field exposure, community engagement, internships, workshops and skill-based modules. To make career guidance services effective, they should be offered by trainers or counsellors with appropriate skills, qualifications and competencies.

2.4 Use Innovative Methods, Strategies and Technologies

Multiple and varied strategies such as discussions, projects, internships, professional mentoring, work placements and site visits can improve the quality of learning. Problem-solving involves assessing a situation, analysing the problem, considering possible solutions and choosing a suitable course of action. Problem-based learning helps students address the difficulties that prevent them from securing employment. Teamwork, communication, critical thinking and decision-making are important competencies that employers expect from graduates.

Teachers and trainers must use innovative methods and modern technologies to make learning interactive, engaging and effective. Methods such as gamification, project-based learning, flipped classrooms, experiential learning and collaborative learning can be supported by tools such as smart classrooms, virtual learning, artificial intelligence, digital tools and QR codes for supplementary information. These technologies allow students to learn individually and collectively, develop content, produce new knowledge, connect with subject experts and access quality learning materials. Such approaches promote student-centred learning, critical thinking and responsiveness to diverse learning styles.

2.5 Encourage the Concept of “Learning While Earning”

The concept of learning while earning is important for promoting work culture among students. It helps students earn while studying and meet part of their living and educational expenditure. It also develops habits of savings, responsibility and financial awareness. Undertaking work, whether major or minor, enables students to apply theoretical knowledge and gain work-related skills that can facilitate suitable employment. As stated by the International Labour Organization (2013), such opportunities help develop personal skills, occupational interests, professional values and personality in relation to academic fields of study and future careers.

Early work experience forms good habits and helps students establish contact with employers. It enables them to carry experience into the permanent job market and accelerates their transition into regular employment. As stated in the International Labour Conference resolution (2008), work while learning can be an effective educational tool that provides exploratory learning and connects education with future careers. Carnevale Anthony P. et al. (2015) also noted that students pursuing career-related majors such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), business, education and healthcare can benefit when work experience complements academic learning.

2.6 Develop Direct Relationships with Prospective Employers and Companies

Educational institutions can develop linkages with prospective employers and companies in their surrounding area. They should build rapport with them by inviting employers to participate in academic sessions, provide hands-on experience and mentor students on employability-related aspects. Institutions can build links with employers to ensure that students:

1. become aware of higher education and employment opportunities;
2. develop high aspirations and career ambitions;
3. acquire the skills required to manage their careers;
4. gain work experience through internships, apprenticeships and projects; and
5. learn how to make effective applications for securing employment.

Universities can establish understanding and linkages with key employers or industries to strengthen generic skills, plan student projects, provide apprenticeships and internships, and develop the competencies required for employment (Reddy MCR, 2020). Universities can also collaborate with employers’ associations and trade unions for students’ projects, apprenticeships and internships. They can attract major employers to campuses through special events, conferences and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for teacher training, student exposure and work experience. Employers and their representatives can deliver lectures, guide final-year projects, attend project presentations and participate in campus placements. As stated by Reddy MCR (2015), employers can also act as liaison members with faculty, serve as external members on Boards of Studies for curriculum design and support research scholars in their projects.

Institutions and faculty members can increase student involvement in employer meetings and professional networks by inviting professionals as classroom speakers, expert members in curriculum development, project evaluators and observers in final-year project presentations. Such interactions help students understand career options, prepare for employment and develop confidence to secure suitable jobs.

2.7 Encourage Teachers and Students to Share Their Inventions and Initiatives

Educational institutions should encourage teachers and students to share their inventions and initiatives with companies. Such sharing can help students refine their ideas, build connections with industry experts, find internships or mentorship opportunities and secure employment. Pegg et al. (2012) referred to initiatives such as innovations in teaching subjects, provision of modern infrastructure facilities, and involvement of industrial experts in curriculum development and organisation of teachers' training on learning methodologies. These initiatives can improve skills and enable students to compete more effectively in the labour market. While developing the curriculum, Jorre de St Jorre and Oliver (2018) remarked that institutions should involve stakeholders such as employers, professionals and alumni in the design, delivery and assessment of learning. This approach makes the curriculum more responsive to the expectations of the world of work and supports students in developing employability-related capacities.

2.8 Strengthen Alumni Relations and Networks

Educational institutions can establish and strengthen connections with alumni, who can guide students in securing internships, preparing for competitive examinations, facing interviews and identifying job opportunities after completion of their courses. Alumni can provide industry contacts, training support and placement assistance for successful students seeking employment. Alumni networks may be maintained through institutional databases, digital platforms and social media. Colleges and universities can prepare lists of outgoing students along with contact numbers, postal addresses and e-mail addresses, and request them to periodically communicate their current employment status to the placement officer.

Universities can also identify suitable strategies to connect with alumni. As Wetherill (2008) observed, universities can establish online library services for alumni, making them regular destinations as graduates move into their careers. Strong alumni relations can therefore serve both current students and former students, creating a continuing professional support system.

2.9 Conduct Sports and Recreational Activities

Educational institutions can conduct games, sports and recreational activities to support students' physical development and personality development, along with communication skills and team-building capacities. Such activities help students understand the dynamics of cooperation and competition, identify their strengths, improve participation and learn how to treat competitors with respect. Participation in games and sports can increase

confidence levels and develop the quick decision-making necessary for leadership roles. Sports also support teamwork, goal setting, discipline and the ability to balance priorities.

2.10 Establish and Strengthen Counselling and Placement Services

Counselling and placement cells should be established and strengthened with suitable infrastructure to assist students in developing employability skills. Such cells can help students make appropriate career choices, prepare for jobs, acquire soft skills, participate in talent contests, obtain apprenticeship training, enter and sustain themselves in work, understand vocational opportunities, become aware of training opportunities, learn procedures for applying for jobs, register for employment, understand minimum qualifications and essential skills required for jobs, and prepare for interviews. Effective counselling and placement services can function as an important bridge between academic learning and employment.

3.0 Role of Academic Departments in Enhancing Graduate Employability

Many departments in colleges and universities offer courses in arts, commerce and sciences. These departments must also take responsibility for identifying students' needs, imparting quality education and helping students achieve their academic and career goals. As part of enabling students to secure suitable employment, Reddy M.C.R. (2025) specified that departments should identify potential companies and develop rapport with them, understand the requirements of those companies, prepare students according to employer expectations, organise one- or two-day intensive orientation programmes with information and counselling, invite companies for campus selections, organise job fairs, invite relevant industries and agencies, publish directories or create websites containing information about available opportunities and services, maintain regular contact with placement officers, and provide telephone or online access to counselling services.

Academic departments can perform the following functions in the career development of students:

6. develop effective communication and conversational skills;
7. strengthen skills needed for teamwork and cooperation;
8. facilitate effective use of technologies;
9. enhance self-motivation;
10. establish personal discipline, commitment and self-actualisation;
11. promote awareness of one's aptitudes, interests, values and personality traits;
12. develop social interaction skills, emotional control and self-concept;
13. facilitate the basic understanding and habits of good health;
14. develop educational awareness;
15. develop the relationship between self, education and employment opportunities;
16. expand career awareness and knowledge of vocations;
17. help in career exploration and analysis of careers that are of interest; and
18. facilitate career planning and decision-making skills.

4.0 Role of Academic Libraries in Career Development and Employment Services

The library is the heart of any university or institution, extending services across all spheres of knowledge, including career-related information. Colleges and universities, particularly their libraries and library staff, have an important role in the employability of students. Nidhi Niwant Rakshikar (2014) observed that the library, as a resource centre, plays an important role in guiding and directing students towards more suitable career choices. Reddy MCR (2025) also remarked that many university and college libraries play a key role in career information and guidance services for their users.

Depending on the location and institutional needs, libraries can provide services ranging from advice on resume building to job-hunting tools. They can also offer orientation classes on computer skills such as Excel and Word. The library can directly help students develop employability skills by providing resources such as career information materials, information on potential employers, current awareness of the job market, skill-development resources and guidance on the appropriate use of social media.

Lary (1985) observed that a librarian who is well-versed in information sources and services can provide guidance in identifying educational resources, training experiences, agencies offering such opportunities and other career choices with similar preparation. A librarian can create a dedicated career information centre with suitable print and electronic materials, organise career information into files and folders for student access, and arrange special lectures, seminars and discussions on career-related information. Thus, academic libraries should be recognised not merely as information repositories, but also as active career information and employability support centres within higher education institutions.

5.0 Responsibilities of Students in Developing Employability and Securing Employment

In securing employment, graduate students have an important responsibility to understand their strengths and weaknesses, identify ways of overcoming limitations, and remain aware of employment opportunities notified in print and electronic media. They must take responsibility for improving their knowledge and skills beyond their main subjects. Although managements provide infrastructure and related resources, it is the responsibility of students to use the available resources effectively to equip themselves with necessary skills and talents.

Students must attend classes regularly, remain attentive, participate actively in learning and seek clarifications from teachers whenever required. They should also develop problem-solving, analytical, communication and language skills. In addition, they must strengthen their personality through subject knowledge, intelligence, positive attitude, appropriate behaviour, confidence, discipline and professional presentation. Regular participation in academic, co-curricular, physical and cultural activities can support self-discipline, teamwork, confidence and overall personality development. Thus, employability is not only the responsibility of institutions; it also requires active student participation and self-development.

6.0 Critical Reflection and Suggestions for Institutional Improvement

The discussion in this paper indicates that graduate employability cannot be improved by a single activity such as placement training or occasional career guidance. It requires a comprehensive institutional approach. Academic institutions should recognise employability as an educational outcome that is linked to curriculum, pedagogy, practical exposure, digital competence, communication skills, employer relationships, library services, alumni support and student self-development. When these elements function separately, their impact remains limited. When they are coordinated, they can create a stronger pathway from higher education to employment.

A critical issue is that many institutions continue to emphasise formal academic instruction, while employability requires practical, behavioural and transferable skills. Therefore, colleges and universities should periodically review their curricula in consultation with employers, professionals, alumni and students. They should also strengthen internships, apprenticeships, project work, field exposure and learning while earning opportunities. Counselling and placement services should not be treated as occasional activities but as continuing institutional services available to students throughout their academic life.

Another important implication is the need to promote lifelong learning within higher education. In a changing economy, skills become outdated quickly, and graduates must be prepared to learn continuously. Academic institutions should therefore cultivate self-learning, adaptability, digital readiness, communication, career planning and problem-solving capacities. Libraries, departments, teachers, alumni and placement cells can jointly contribute to this lifelong learning orientation. Such an approach can help students not only obtain their first job, but also sustain and develop their careers over time.

7.0 Conclusion

This paper has discussed the roles of educational institutions in making students employable by equipping institutions with good infrastructure facilities, imparting quality and practical education, integrating skill areas into curriculum and instructional modules, using innovative methods and technologies, encouraging learning while earning, developing relationships with prospective employers and companies, encouraging teachers and students to share their inventions and initiatives, strengthening alumni relations, establishing or strengthening counselling and placement services, and conducting sports and recreational activities. It has also discussed the roles of academic departments and libraries in enabling students to secure employment, and the responsibilities of students in improving their employability skills.

The central argument of the paper is that promotion of graduate employability should be recognised as a shared institutional responsibility within higher education. Colleges and universities must create enabling academic environments, strengthen career-oriented curricula, build employer linkages, provide counselling and placement support, use libraries as career information centres, and encourage students to take active responsibility for their own skill development. Such an integrated approach can help bridge the gap between higher education and the

world of work. It can also enable graduates to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and lifelong learning capacities required for meaningful employment and continued professional growth.

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