BEYOND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS IN CREATING JOB-READY GRADUATES

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Abstract - Beyond Academic Achievement: A Study on Effectiveness of Virtual Classrooms in Producing Job-ready Graduates Author: Dr Gowri Bhardwaj Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, GGDSD College, Sector 32, Chandigarh gowribhardwaj@gmail.com Abstract The digital transformation of higher education has basically redefined the way knowledge is delivered, accessed, and assessed. Even though virtual classrooms are not a new concept, but the widespread adoption of the same post-COVID in 2019 has transformed higher education. The very term - Educational Technology (EdTech) has expanded opportunities for flexible and technology-enabled learning. The success of these platforms continues to be evaluated largely through academic performance, learner engagement, and technology adoption.

However, according to various studies, in an increasingly AI-driven and dynamic employment landscape, academic achievement alone is no longer the sole indicator to see if the graduates are job ready. Employers primarily seek those graduates who demonstrate communication, collaboration, critical thinking, leadership, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and professional ethics. Despite the growing reliance on digital learning environments, limited empirical evidence exists on whether virtual classrooms intentionally cultivate these employability-oriented soft skills or primarily facilitate cognitive learning. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of virtual classrooms in understanding students' job readiness.

The study will primarily focus on Journalism and Mass Communication students, with a possible comparative perspective from selected academic disciplines (preferably Commerce) to investigate the effectiveness of digital learning experience, faculty interaction and collaborative learning. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design will be adopted using a structured questionnaire administered to students from colleges in Chandigarh. By shifting the focus from academic achievement to employability outcomes, the findings are expected to provide recommendations for academicians/educators, and higher education institutions seeking to create graduates as digital and AI-enabled workforce.

Keywords - Virtual Classrooms, Job Readiness, Digital Learning, Higher Education, Employability.