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IMPACT EVALUATION OF MAHINDRA PRIDE PROGRAM 2020-2021

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Executive Summary

Background

The current study was initiated to assess the impact of the Mahindra Pride Programme, the flagship CSR skill development training intervention by Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. implemented through the K.C. Mahindra Education Trust and Naandi Foundation, for FY 2020-21. The Programme is jointly sponsored by Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd and Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd. The programme comprises of two distinct interventions, namely, Mahindra Pride School (MPS) and Mahindra Pride Classroom (MPC) which are skill development training programmes aimed at training youth from socially and economically disadvantaged communities and helping to get them placed in high growth service sector jobs. The Mahindra Pride School (MPS) consists of a 90-day intensive training programme in four domains, namely Hospitality & Quick service Restaurants (QSRs), IT Enabled Services (ITES), Automotive Sector and Organised Retail. The Mahindra Pride Classrooms provide 40-120 hours of training to final year students studying in Polytechnics, ITIs and Arts & Science Colleges, in Spoken English, Grooming and other soft skills and life skills.

Methodology

The study administered structured interview schedules to 550 students from 7 MPS centres across 5 states along with 935 MPC students in 10 states. The surveys aimed to assess their employment status and obtain feedback on training received and skills acquired, and its consequent impact on the career progression and the standard and quality of life of the students. These were supplemented with qualitative insights through in-depth interviews (IDIs) with other stakeholders such as the programme implementation team, employers, trainers, and students using semi-structured qualitative tools. The sample size was estimated using two-sample probability formula and the final sample distribution among the states/centres was finalized using a proportionate sampling method. The findings of this study will be used for enhancing the programme in a focused manner by assessing its impact and identifying possible need gaps.

Key Findings

Mahindra Pride School (MPS)

MPS is a skill development training programme for youth from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. It aims to train and help youth get placed in high-growth service sector jobs. MPS provided youth from marginalised communities, 90 days of intensive training in four domains namely Hospitality & Quick service Restaurants (QSRs), IT Enabled Services (ITES), the Automotive Sector and Organised Retail.

Demographic and Social Profile of the Students

The mean and median age of respondents was 22 years, with 84% of students in the 18-24 years age group and a higher proportion of females (54%) than males (46%) indicative of a gender-balanced cohort. 46% of the students were from the general category, 29% from OBC, 19% from SC and 4% from ST. Approximately 20% had completed 10+2 or ITI, and 1% had cleared the 10th standard. Around two-thirds were bachelors/undergraduates, while 16% had a Master's degree or higher.

Placement Percentage & Job Profile

Despite the job reductions due to the economic impact of Covid, 100% of students who were looking for a job were successfully placed as a result of the programme. Overall, about 72% of the total students trained who were aspiring for jobs were placed. It is important to note that the remaining

students did not apply for a job as they decided to pursue further education. Further investigations about the current employment status of these students revealed that almost 61% of those who had received placement offers through the program are continuing employment, thus attesting to the high level of employability of MPS students. Moreover, only a small proportion stayed in the organization where they were originally placed. The students switched to next level jobs with higher salaries which shows that students were able to acquire the skills and expertise to crack interviews with other companies without support from the MPS team, further enhancing their employability.

Overall Feedback on the Course

Most students, irrespective of gender, were satisfied with all the aspects of the course, viz., content, quality, relevance, clarity, and duration. The “course content” and “trainer quality” parameters received an exceptionally high rating from all surveyed students, which is more than 90% of students. “Course clarity” and “duration” were also positively rated by a high proportion of students. The results were corroborated by the qualitative findings.

Impact of the Course on Career

The feedback obtained on the impact of the course on students’ careers was overwhelmingly positive. Almost 88% reported that the course provided skills that continue to help them in their individual professional roles. A similarly high percentage attested to having acquired the confidence to do their jobs which was extremely helpful in their professional progress. A significant segment (85%) of the respondents also claimed that the course helped them in building relationships with peers from their respective industries. Almost all the students agreed that the course had been “highly impactful” and had resulted in improvement in their standard and quality of life. These findings have been confirmed by the insights gleaned from qualitative data.

Mahindra Pride Classroom (MPC):

MPCs were set up in addition to the MPS in partnership with the State Governments in Polytechnics, ITIs and Arts & Science colleges. The focus of these classrooms is to provide 40-120 hours of training to final year students in Spoken English, Life Skills, Aptitude, Interview Preparedness, Group Discussion and Digital Literacy. MPC program is designed for students who are in the final years of their college.

Demographic and Social Profile of the Students

The mean and median age of respondents was 21 years, with 86% of students in the 18-24 years age group, and 62% male respondents. 41% students were from the general category, 39% were from OBC 17% from SC and 2% from ST. Almost 40% had completed their graduation/undergraduate course, followed by ITI (27%). Only 11% had either completed or were pursuing a Master’s degree or above.

Placement Percentage & Job Profile

Given that the MPC programme is primarily oriented towards imparting job market-related skills for college going students and facilitating placements after graduation, 28% of the 935 students surveyed received a job offer through this program, which is commendable. More than one-third of the students who had received placements are also continuing with their employment, thus attesting to the success of the MPC programme in view of its objectives. A sizeable 42% of the students wanted to pursue higher education and hence were not part of the placement process.

Overall Feedback on the Course

Around 85% of the MPC students, irrespective of gender, registered satisfaction with all the aspects of training except “course duration”. “Trainer quality”, one of the most significant measures of the

experience, expertise and ability of the trainer was almost unanimously (94%) rated positively by the students. The parameters of “course content”, “clarity” and “relevance” received similarly high ratings (nearly 90% each) from all the surveyed students.

Impact of the Course on Career

The majority (88%) of respondents reported that the course imparted skills that continue to help them in their professional lives. A similarly high percentage of the students attested that the course gave them the confidence to do their jobs, empowered their professional progress, and enabled them to build relationships with peers from their respective industries. These reported outcomes align excellently with the core objective of MPCs, which is to enhance the job prospects, and hence, the standard of living of students by imparting knowledge and skills relevant to respectable livelihoods. In this context, nearly 87% of all respondents agreed that completing the course improved their standard and quality of life. The qualitative data compiled further revealed the relevance of the programme in terms of imparting soft skills such as confidence and communication, which are essential adjuncts in the current and future job markets.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges of Covid, both the programs managed to create huge impact amongst the students – not only in terms of placements, but also in terms of imparting sound essential skills and knowledge for enhancing the students’ employability. The MPS programme managed to place 100% of its trained students who were aspiring for jobs in 2020-21, even in the face of the challenges posed by Covid. Almost 90% of both MPS and MPC students attested to a boost in their confidence as well as enhanced communication and interpersonal skills, in addition to the technical knowledge content of the programs. Much credit has to be given to the MPS and MPC program teams for their tireless efforts in coordinating online classes, rectifying issues and problems of Covid classes, supporting the students during Covid, and ensuring that the students are learning and gaining necessary skills for their careers. This holistic approach during Covid resulted in creating high positive impact in the lives of the students. The program created great impact in the following areas:

- High employability of MPS and MPC students
- Confidence boost for cracking job interviews and performing jobs efficiently
- Enhanced communication and interpersonal skills
- Enhanced Technical knowledge in the respective domain of the student

Recommendations

Since the MPS programme has been discontinued in the aftermath of Covid, the study focussed on measuring its impact in FY 2020-21, and not on providing recommendations. In the context of MPC, while applauding the outstanding achievements of the programme, the study has the following recommendations to make:

- **Engagement & partnerships with the placements committees of respective colleges:** The MPC programme team should engage more with the placements committee of the respective colleges so that the college placement committees play a more pro-active role in the placement process.
- **Work with colleges that do not have a placement committee and encourage them to have a placement committee to facilitate jobs for students.**
- **Increase in course duration:** In line with the students’ feedback, an increase in the course duration may be considered– preferably to 6 months of 10 hours per week. This would enable the students to have a more immersive, enhanced experience, wherein they get more time to hone their aptitude, communication, and arithmetic skills.