



A STUDY OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) AND GROSS ENROLLMENT RATIO IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Learning can be gained in a variety of ways in which Recognition of Prior Learning is the one important area. Recognition of Prior Learning or "RPL" as per National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF), is the process of recognizing previous learning, often experiential, towards gaining a qualification. RPL in higher education is a process intended to assess the applicant students' past experience, gained through formal, non-formal or informal learning with an objective to recognise their previous achievements formally and award appropriate credits.

The main objective of the paper is to explore the possibilities of implementing RPL in the higher education system in India by giving value to the skills and competencies people have acquired through formal or informal learning.

The study is exploratory in nature and based on primary and secondary data. The main findings of the study indicate that the RPL in higher education is one of the recommended drivers that can help India to achieve its target of 50% GER by 2035. The research has found that by recognizing the experience of the individuals and systematically mapping it with the outcomes of various NSQF Levels will have a positive impact on productivity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

KEY WORDS: Recognition of Prior Learning, Skill Education, Higher Education, NSQF, Skill Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Recognition of Prior Learning" or "RPL" as per National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF), is the process of recognizing previous learning, often experiential, towards gaining a qualification. RPL has an aim to include those segments of the society who have failed to pursue higher education for various reasons and therefore have entered into labour market or into the world of work without any formal qualification. RPL provides such segments with an opportunity to get assessed for their prior work experience that they have earned and create a learning portfolio from their previous experience with an objective to map that with the learning outcomes of various programs and modules that are offered in the higher vocational education work stream at different NSQF Levels.. The outcome of this assessment and mapping is to allocate credits to the applicant candidate who has been assessed in order to seek exemption from going through some of the modules in the course applied. This paper is an attempt to understand the broader dimensions of RPL in line with practices adopted by some countries and how RPL can be adopted in India as a pathway that will facilitate access to future higher learning to the eligible excluded population.

Various papers, practices were studied along with existing RPL models of different countries to understand the methodology and its impact. Surveys and focused interactions were also conducted to better understand the awareness levels of Industry and Academia with regards to RPL and their perceived benefits for implementing RPL in the country, thereby helping to improve employability and GER in the higher education.

The GER in higher education for India is lower as compared to developed nations because a large population of students in the relevant age group drops out and does not enroll into higher educational institutions. This is because either they have not completed their prior class successfully to become eligible for next level admissions or in case they have, they prefer to enter into labor market due to financial needs. As per various data and AISHE reports available, total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 37.4 million that makes a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 26.3%. GER in Higher education in India is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. At present, according to the AISHE-2019, the higher education sector in India consists of 37.4 million students across 993 universities, 39,931 colleges, and 10,725 stand-alone institutions. Given

that the population in 18-23 years is more than 140 million, it means approximately 102.6 million populations does not enroll themselves in higher education and drops out from education. Perhaps if we look from the prism of eligibility enrolment ratio, (EER) which is the ratio of eligible population those who have at least passed Class 12 in the 18-23 age group) as per a paper published by AIU, there is approx. 54.8 million population who would be eligible to enroll in Higher education. By bringing them in the ambit of education India's GER ratio can go up to 64.9% and be at par with GER of developed nations.

A similar drop out trend could be seen at secondary and higher secondary level between the age of 16-17. The GER at these levels is approx. 70% and 55%. With such a huge number of dropouts at these levels and age groups, millions of youths in the country would be entering labor market with no formal qualifications in hand that can facilitate their growth and contribution. As per reports more than 92.4% of work force is in unorganized and informal sectors with no employment contracts. Perhaps this population works in different sectors and learns throughout their work life without any formal opportunity to get recognized for their experience and learnings that they gain.

As per India Skills Report, Employability of India's youth has remained stagnant for the past three years, lingering around 46% of participants who are job-ready. The state of employability has not improved over the last few years, implying the need for more robust actions.

The report has highlighted that, candidates with 1-5 years of experience continue to remain in maximum demand (over 40%) while fresher make up for only 15% of the overall talent demand.

The above data points are important as it indicates the challenges and incongruity between demand and supply side. We have a situation where millions enter the higher education but 54% are not job ready while we have millions of people dropping out and entering labor market but they do not have pathways for mobility because their experience is not recognized for a qualification as per market need

1.2 CONTEXT

Millions of people who could not pursue a higher or professional education, entered labour market and started working. Perhaps millions having experience and skills still desire to have a degree or diploma to facilitate their progress and growth for a more rewarding future. As per a youth aspiration survey conducted by Shri Vishwakarma Skill University, 58% of respondent youths desired to have a graduate degree indicating the charm as well as a social status symbol besides a medium to secure better livelihood and jobs.

In fact experienced and qualified/certified will have a higher demand in the market and can contribute towards the demands of productivity and higher performance issues. As India Skills report also indicates that experienced candidates have higher demand in the job market, the Recognition of Prior Learning process can help such persons acquire a formal qualification that matches their knowledge and skills, and thus contribute to improving their employability, earn-ability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem, consequently adding to the economic progress of the nation. In India, we have National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) that has developed a mechanism for a robust system for assessment, accreditation and certification of prior learning both in the formal and nonformal education sectors. This framework has been developed to assess an individual's knowledge, skill and aptitude and grade them with the outcomes of the qualification levels. The learning outcomes, possessed by the learner, can be acquired through formal, informal or non-formal methods. The hierarchal levels defined in the NSQF framework corresponds to a higher level of proficiency demonstrated for a specific competence. This framework provides a clear format for assessing individuals for their knowledge, skills acquired through formal, informal or non-formal ways and certify them at those levels. What requires to be done is to develop a credit-based assessment that can have mobility across the levels and various educational frameworks (general, technical, professional and vocational)

Learning is a continuous process. Every individual experience learning throughout their entire life span. Learning acquired through the formal processes and systems are respected and valued and therefore become aspirational and first choice, however learnings gained through informal and non formal ways are neither understood and nor recognised. On-the-job training, informal apprenticeships, elderly care, self-employment initiatives and activities result in some form of learning gain but most of the time these skills learnt do not get recognised for a formal certification. In absence of a formal degree qualification a large segment of people face discrimination, exploitation and severe disadvantage in getting decent jobs even though they might have the necessary knowledge and skills.

Asymmetric information in the labor market is the other issue that is quite upsetting. The lack of formal education or qualification amongst workers deprive them of being visible or available to labor and

employment market. This creates a serious roadblock to millions of deserving and experienced workforce from getting and exploring work opportunities in the vast and diverse labor market and therefore hampers their mobility. Besides it also hampers their sustainable career progression and growth due the limited visibility and therefore get exploited by employers who engage them. The prevalence of asymmetric information thereby leads to a statistical discrimination and exploitation of this class of workforce.

Across the world, countries have increasingly recognized the value of informal and non-formal learning and many are establishing systems to acknowledge competencies gained through the informal and non-formal ways. Many Developed and Developing countries have done some significant amount of work to address this labor market anomaly and discrimination by developing models, policies and programs that facilitate recognition of prior learning into higher education

II. MATERIALS&METHODS: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN RPL

2.1 SACOB: South Africa:

In South Africa, to meet the demands of global competitiveness and the need to increase participation of south African students in higher education, South Africa introduced RPL. to address the issues of social equity and justice besides the need to improve the knowledge and skills of its workforce and lifelong learning. Students apply for seeking exemption from, foundational or elective modules equivalent to one year of study based on their prior work experience or qualification acquired from another institution. Students have to write and submit a portfolio of their previous work experience or they can provide evidence of qualifications that they may have received from any other institution. These submissions are assessed by the South African College (SACOB) experts as a part of their institutional policy on RPL. The objective is to provide access to desirous learners, basis their prior formal or informal experience, into formal higher education programs. The previous learning experiences are measured against the learning outcomes of the applied programmes and exemptions are then granted for the portion of new learning material that applicant has already acquired in his previous experience. The learner applicant is admitted into the program in order to study and complete the modules that a learner has no experience in. This arrangement helps the learner in the long run as the learner is required to study the areas that they need development in order to perform enhance the level of knowledge and skills to perform their job better.

2.2 MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY: UK

Middlesex University, UK uses RPL as a tool to facilitate student admissions based their previous experience into standard programmes. Through RPL, it enables individuals to have their work-based knowledge acknowledged as relevant, worthwhile and equivalent to learning obtained in the higher education classroom. The university awards credit for the previous learning through a structured process of evaluation and assessment. A maximum amount of credit is up to 60% of the total credits required for getting any qualification. For example, if a graduate program requires 360 credits for its completion, a learner under RPL can claim maximum up to 60% of the credits for their previous experience. The rest of the credits will have to be achieved through course completion that university offers. The university for such candidates who get admitted through RPL, also offers them to complete certain compulsory modules for which credits cannot be claimed basis previous experience. For claiming academic credits the learner /student has to provide evidence of their previous learning that can be assessed for recognition. The evidences that one has to provide are not simple experiences that can be claimed in the form of number of years at work. The evidences have to be quantified in the form of actual learnings that one has gained from the previous experience. One has to demonstrate that the learning experiences gained are relevant to the learning outcomes of the program as defined. The evaluation of actual learnings happens in such a way that its relationship can be examined and established with the learning outcomes of the chosen program. The portfolio that one has created in the specified format must be evidently connecting the learnings gained through previous work experience (formal/non formal) with the outcomes of the degree program that one has chosen to pursue. For this Middlesex University also provides a tutor who will provide initial advice and guidance to applicant for constructing and submitting a claim application. The tutor will also be able to identify where learning outcomes for specific modules are likely to be matched through the evidence of applicants prior learning. The tutors through this mapping and assessment try to make sure that the applicant has achieved the desired learning outcomes of the relevant modules of qualification applied for. This is further reviewed by a second tutor and an external examiner. University has created an Accreditation Board where all such cases are sent for review and final decision to award or reject the claim for the academic credits is decided.

2.3 EURASHE

European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) has been highly vocal about Recognition of Prior Learning to promote different ways of recognising competencies for access to further studies and for awarding credits through a structured peer learning. EURASHE strongly believes that based on the changing educational landscape, RPL can significantly enhance the access to higher education. Following many challenges brought by the recent pandemic, EURASHE believes that RPL could also prove to be a crucial asset in ensuring a more inclusive access to further studies and promoting lifelong learning opportunities.

It is in this context that the project Recognition of Prior Learning in practice, coordinated by the Swedish Council for Higher Education together with governmental and institutional partners from Austria, Croatia, Iceland, Ireland, Sweden and EURASHE as a representative of professional higher education, got initiated with an objective to learn about the situation, challenges and good practices within RPL in higher education in several European countries and promote different ways of recognizing competences for access to further studies and for credits.

In 2019, EURASHE also designed a survey with an objective to learn about the situation, challenges and good practices within RPL in higher education in several European countries. The survey was run by the Swedish Council for Higher Education with institutional partners and EURASHE. The representatives of higher education institutions at all levels were invited to share their views and experiences.

The survey results indicated that RPL had a large participation and coverage at Degree and Post Graduate degree levels amongst the respondent countries and institutions. The survey results also highlighted 4 Key drivers of RPL.

1. Strengthening Life Long Learning and Employability.
2. Better Access to Higher Education and Inclusiveness
3. Enhancing Diversity of Institutions student Population
4. Required by Policy and Legislations.

The survey also highlighted the challenges that RPL needs to overcome. Among the top key challenges, it identified awareness of RPL opportunities and building capacities for RPL are the key constraints in deploying it effectively. It also indicated that attitude within the academic community, their expertise and capacity to manage coherence and deal with the requirements of RPL besides workload and duration are key issues to be addressed for streamlining RPL.

III. RPL IN INDIA

Government of India got a study conducted in 2018, with the help of ILO, to pilot test the RPL. The study was jointly conducted with ILO as a part of its system reforms agenda. Four sectors were identified and industry was roped in to understand the effectiveness of RPL in these sectors with a purpose to replicate it in other sectors as well.

The results from the study were highly encouraging. It showed that the RPL has had a positive effect on various dimensions including income opportunities, occupational safety, social status and openness to further learning. Perhaps the study indicated that impact observed on income was minimal the Occupational Health and safety practices and social standing were more positive with 34%, 14%. On the willingness to undergo further training dimension the responses were highly positive, 60%, indicating a strong desire to upgrade knowledge, skills and attain higher qualifications. The study report is also indicative of reforms that are required to leverage the RPL as a path way that promotes life long and life wide learning besides social inclusion in the country. The RPL approach, that besides certification, uses assessments to address the skill gaps by offering bridge trainings that will further upskill the candidate and help meet the national and international labour market requirements.

Perhaps in India today RPL focusses on enhancing employability opportunities by reducing inequalities between those who do not have a formal qualification over others who do have. This initiative of RPL under the PMKVY 2 is expected to enable a large number of Indian youths to take up industry-relevant skill training, which will help them secure a better livelihood, however it has yet not been used as a tool to strengthen educational mobility by providing higher education pathways. This requires government to make certain policy changes that recognises the higher qualification earned through RPL mode.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 RPL Survey in Haryana

In 2020 the researcher conducted a pilot survey to understand the awareness, advantages, and adoption of Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education in Haryana. A set of questions were designed that were administered amongst the Industry Experts and Academic Leaders. The questionnaire was sent to a set of industry professionals from various sectors and a separate questionnaire was sent to academicians. The follow up calls and discussions were also done with some expert groups to understand their point of view.

4.1.1 RPL Survey:

4.1.1.1 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: Industry & Academia Awareness of RPL

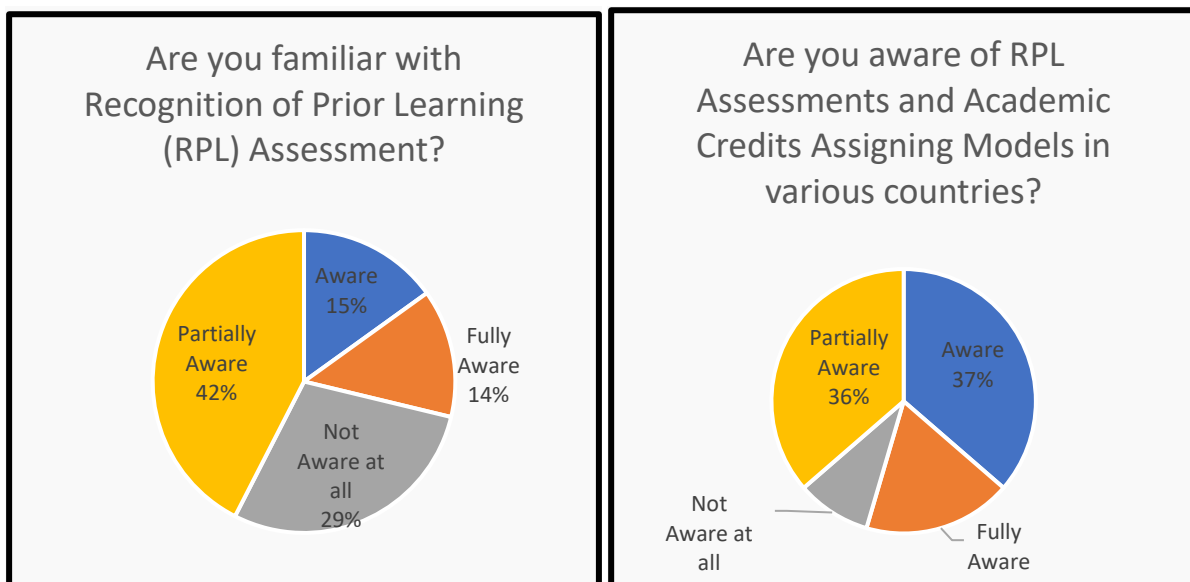


Figure 1a (Industry Response)

Figure 1b (Academia Response)

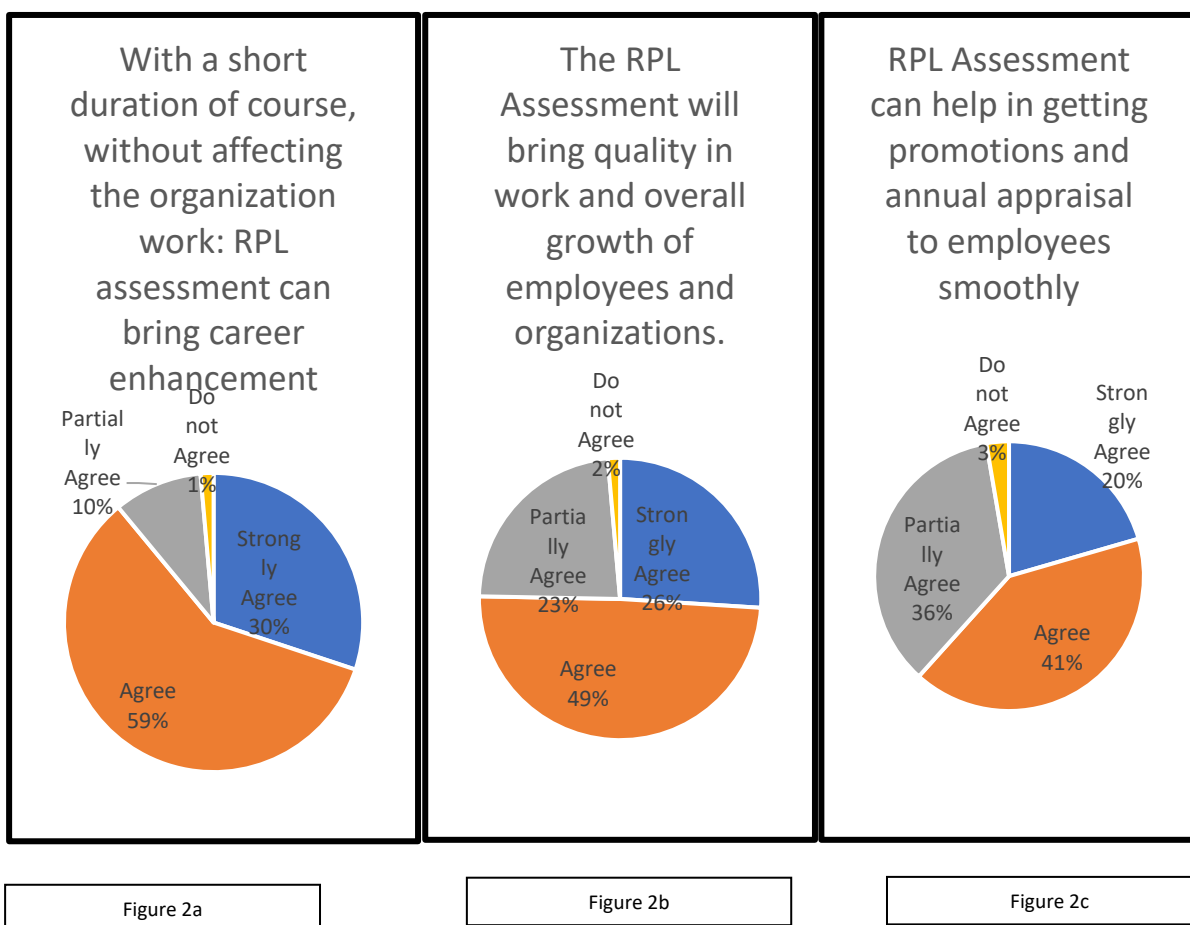
4.1.1.2 Awareness Challenges

Fig1a above is the outcome of the responses received from the industry experts. As per survey responses received, only 29% of industry experts were aware of recognition of prior learning. 71% were not aware of RPL or were partially aware about RPL However, in case of academic leader respondents. Figure1b, 55% were aware about the RPL this variation in the awareness about RPL amongst the industry and academic community is a matter of concern as it will have significant impact on adopting and implementing RPL in the respective organisations as a pathway to development, employment & career progression. Industry awareness is key to the success of RPL and given that asymmetry in the labour market information system, the industry awareness and implementation of RPL can address this issue. Consequently, this can raise the demand for the certified candidates. The issue of awareness and implementation of RPL at academic level can address the challenge of developing the assessment and certification models that can attract the eligible population for higher vocational education and learning as a medium to access advancement in learning

and skilling. Addressing this awareness gap can significantly impact the success of RPL deployment in India as it will open opportunities for the millions of the eligible aspirants to get recognized and certified for the skills and competencies that they have gained and acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning

We have a world of work on one side and world of academia on the other and both hold their own perspectives, interpretations and understanding with regard to the world of experience. The academia values “theory” as a resource in knowledge creation. They value learning through theory and concepts rather than learning through work and experience. However the Industry gives more preference to knowledge, skills, and attitude for practical application that one has gained through experience. This gap in understanding also triggers confrontation amongst these two worlds and the lack of awareness about RPL further widens the gap between both of them consequently impacting the much required synergy and coordination between both . Hence the issue of awareness and harmonisation is important and needs to be addressed that brings both the worlds on to a level of equal understanding that understands and appreciates RPL

4.1.1.3 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS – Industry Responses



V. DISCUSSION

5.1 CAREER ADVANCEMENT, PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION

In Fig 2, When asked about the career advancement, 89% of industry expert respondents agreed that RPL assessments can help an individual for his career advancement. In fact at workplace, in the industries the appraisals are based on assessing the past work performance. The employer annually assesses their employees for their learning, unlearning and relearning aptitudes and how well they achieved result and tasks assigned to them from time to time. The employees learning curves are monitored and measured from

time to time for career advancement as well. However majority of employees, despite they have gained higher experiences, could not progress on the hierarchy ladder in absence of having a higher qualifications. Perhaps their experience, learnings and achievements can be assessed and certified through a structured RPL process with respect to certain set higher education qualifications for which they can apply. Learners who seek admissions through this model can further enhance their knowledge, skills, and qualifications that can help them to perform better and seek higher and better career opportunities. The process and journey of acquiring higher qualifications through RPL will significantly boost the productivity as the learners will learn new and better ways of performing their jobs. Not only will it be beneficial to learners it will also encourage higher educational institutions to strengthen the culture of developing outcome based learning programs. Given that 72.7 % of respondents agreed that RPL can facilitate frugal innovation, the inclusion of RPL into higher education can strengthen innovation and creativity that is important for productivity and performance of organisations resulting into economic growth. The fusion of Learners experience with new concepts inside the classroom will also nurture ideation and new ways of working. 81.7% respondents were in fact of the view that acknowledging prior learning experience for higher education will help in improving economic development of the country. In fact RPL can highly benefit in facilitating lifelong learning and life wide learning and will positively impact employability and sustainable livelihood

5.2 CHALLENGE

The results of academic leader responses were even more stunning (fig 3). While 55% respondents agreed that they were aware about RPL, 100% respondents agreed that assigning academic credits through recognition of previous learning is a challenge. This challenge is due to various reasons. There is lack of vision to recognise the unique function of University as an institution to formally recognise learner experience and achievements, Universities haven't yet recognised the need to innovatively rediscover themselves and become institutions that focus on developing the skills of tomorrow in a way where learnings can be personalised to the requirements and preference of the individual learner. The future universities need to be the institutions that promote life long and life wide learning by offering multiple pathways including Recognition of Prior learning. The higher institutions don't have lifelong learning as a priority and therefore no efforts have been made to understand it or study this mode of learning. This lack of effort has resulted into a poor clarity amongst its institutional resources about RPL consequently there are unclear doubts about the reliability and validity of RPL. Besides this there is lack of skilled staff and quality assessors in the institutions. The society, industry and the eligible learning population lack awareness and in absence of any model the deployment of RPL has not been seen. While 100% respondents agreed that RPL will motivate the dropouts and adult learners for furthering their education and skills, 81.7% agreed that assessment models must be developed for awarding credits through RPL.

5.3 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS - Corporate

POSITIVE WORDS	NEGATIVE WORDS
practical, smoothly, model, established, success, expert, skill, reason, on time, confidence, allow, wish, improved, growing, advancement, attractive, artisans, master, craftsman, sustainable, community, encourage, create, skilled, concept, content, familiar, academic, knowledge, learning, provide, work focus, helping, gain, successful, academic, learning, provide, work, growing, advancement	Lack, demand, unable

RPL Survey Response of Academic Leaders:

a. Quantitative Analysis

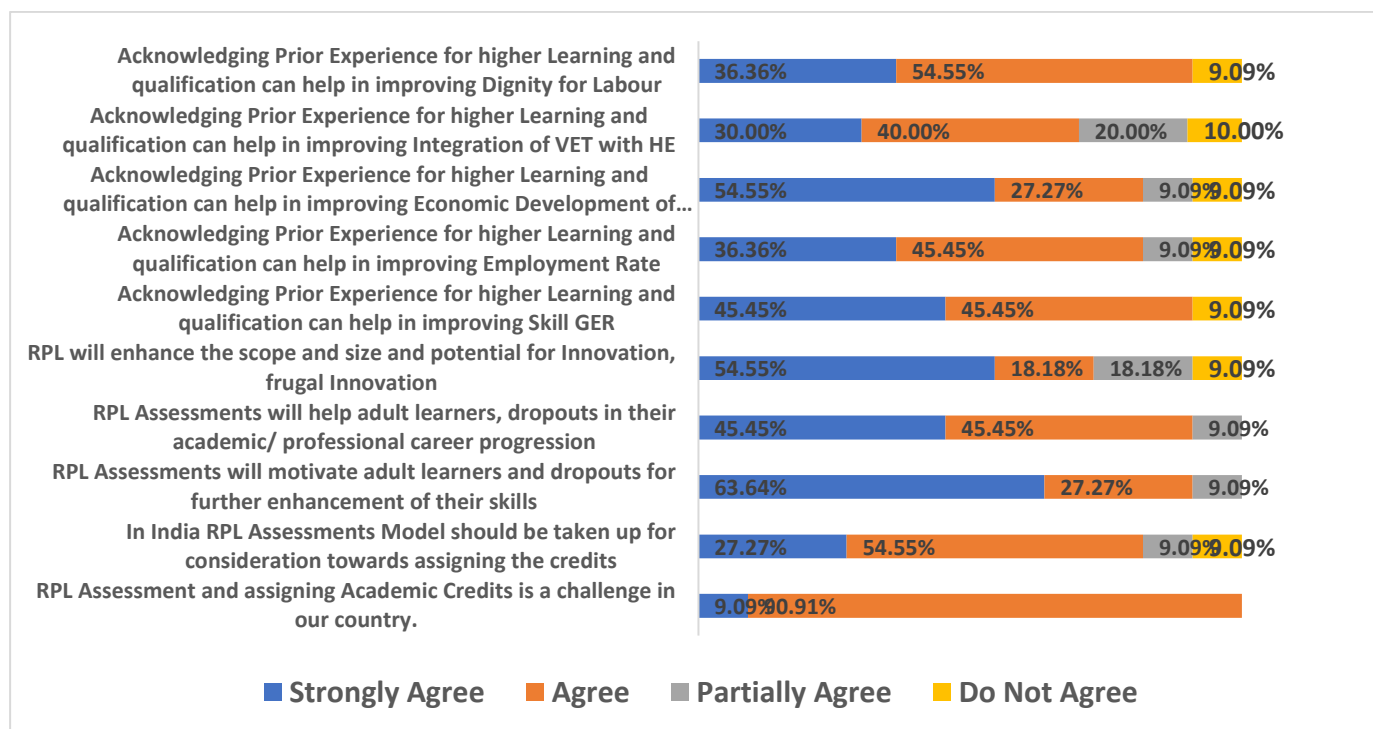


Figure 3

VII. OPPORTUNITY:

In India educational institutes are broadly classified in three major categories namely University, College and Stand-alone institutions. As per the report of All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), 2018-19, there are 993 Universities, 39931 Colleges and 10725 standalone institutions in India. The total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be around 37.4 million. As per AISHE 2018-19 report, after surveying 38,179 colleges and found that 64% of them had just 500 students enrolled in them. Even amongst them more than half of the colleges had less than 200 students enrolled. In another annual survey report by Ministry of Human Resource (now Ministry of Education), only 4% of all the colleges in India have more than 3000 students. These reports clearly indicate that Indian higher education institutions have a huge unutilised capacity that goes wasted every year. This is an ideal opportunity for Universities and Higher Education Institutions to develop a backward-forward learning integration models by synchronising world of experience with world of academics. This will require HEI's to innovate and to provide multiple pathways in UG/PG programs for those potential students with wide range of backgrounds and prior learning experiences. One unique function of universities is to innovatively rediscover themselves and become institutions that formally recognise learners experience and achievements. Many national and international surveys have found that the success of the future universities and higher education lies in their focus on the following 4 drivers.

1. Future Skills Focus (76%)
2. The Life Long Learning University (65%)

3. Multi Institutional Pathways (63%)

4. Personalization of Academic Learning (54%)

Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education is a great opportunity that will help Indian higher education system to reinvent itself and also help nation achieve its target of 50% GER by 2035 besides creating an inclusive learning culture that blends experience and class together and focusses on the changing demand and outcomes. Given that more than 60% of work force is only secondary education, It is also an effective method of including the excluded ones who desire to enter higher education but in absence of a policy fail to do so.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Intervention of the central government to develop an RPL policy and practices for higher education that explicitly address to remove the challenges and roadblocks in the path of work based learning. The policy explicitly needs to have enough provisions that motivates the eligible drop outs, adults and experienced learners to enrol for higher education besides incentivising educational institutions and employers. The approach requires the commitment from Academics and Industry without which it will be difficult to make this policy successful. Hence the policy also needs to create a clear and credible system that will enable life long learning in a sustainable manner.

2. In India UGC has approved the BVoC and MVoc programs with a differentiated methodology for credit allotment. In these VET programs, 60% of the credits are earned through non class room methods including apprenticeship, work embedded assignments, and practical and workshop based learnings while 40% of credits are earned through class room theoretical and conceptual inputs offered through face to face learning or MOOCS. The 60% of credits can be assessed and mapped to the prior experience of the applicant. This requires a significant commitment from Higher Education Institutions and Industries in terms of creating infrastructure and assessment capacities and making policies

3. The higher education institutions need to create a wing for RPL that defines the comprehensive assessment framework and credit allotment methodology. Most of the nations and institutions who have addressed higher learning and skill gaps, identified through structured process of RPL, have noticed that when skill gaps are addressed through a blended learning strategy (F2F, Self Paced Learning, Virtual Learnings etc) it effectively developed the vocational, professional and technical competencies of life long learners.

On the other hand industries can support by modifying recruitment guidelines to accommodate new programs/qualifications in their recruitment and promotional guidelines besides working with educational institutions in developing effective assessments methodologies for RPL

4. The credibility of system will depend on the quality of the processes defined to clearly map outcomes of a program/qualification with the prior learning experiences of the learner. It will also require an immense awareness of such qualifications awarded across the stakeholders including students, society, institutions and industry.

5. The existing available unutilised capacities in higher education institutions can be aligned to a community college model (part time/evening/night education) that can help India to achieve the GER with economies of scale.

6. This needs every institution to train and employ staff counsellors/assessors who are able to clarify doubts with respect to reliability and validity of RPL outcomes and quality of learning assessed and have expertise to allocate credits to specific experience matching outcomes. The industry can offer its subject matter experts for assessments and help in mapping student experience portfolio with the outcomes of the program applied for

Every Higher Education Institution may constitute a Credit Accreditation Board to award and approve credits and equivalence with level outcomes

7. Every state government along with the higher, technical and skill education departments can formulate a state policy that can be pursued by both educational institutions as well as industries and employing organisations. A proper coordination amongst all stake holders is important. Appropriate communication and awareness is required to mobilize the eligible youths. The local universities and institutions can design and tailor their programs as per the local market needs and requirements aligned with national objectives.

IX. CONCLUSION:

Recognition of Prior Learning is an effective tool in strengthening the foundation of national development objectives besides addressing. RPL is a mechanism, through which millions of youths can get access to upgrade their level of knowledge, skill, abilities and qualifications and contribute meaningfully towards their personal, professional and national interests. In a country like India it can act as boon to millions of potential eligible aspiring youths who for many constraints had to drop the pursuit of higher education and opted to enter the labour market. RPL can be a transformative tool to achieve higher GER along with bringing sustainable livelihood and employability as it will also help in determining correct wage fixation as per the acquired higher qualifications and will check on the exploitation of skilled workforce. RPL will also encourage, recognise and certify those informal, traditional skills that were passed from one generation to another and will also enhance their dignity and quality of such work. RPL, by addressing skill gaps, will help in achieving higher productivity there by making a significant contribution to the national GDP.

Given the emergence of workforce need in an emerging global market struggling with demographic challenges, RPL can make these qualified resources eligible for a global mobility in wake of the international job demands.

An important challenge that needs to be addressed is to develop a mechanism of identifying where the skills exist and how the same can be documented and communicated with the eligible desirous candidates. There is a need to develop methods of creating the potential individuals portfolio, reviewing them and also methods to assess them through written and oral ways including demonstration. The assessments need to be effectively, qualitatively and transparently aligned to the different levels of National Skill Qualification Framework, so that really benefits the applicants in long run. The information campaigns, counselling and guidance is key to the success of this RPL in higher education. RPL has for sure a great potential to tap and realise unrecognised talent by providing pathways to higher qualification and learning. It can surely be an effective mode for the employers to up skill and retain the aspiring potential resources by offering them higher career opportunities and differentiated wages, linked to higher qualifications and skills. This will also help in an efficient method to address the asymmetries in the Labour Market Information System and provide more qualified and job ready talent availability information to recruiters.

RPL provides employers opportunity to design flexible compensation plans, talent engagement strategies that will boost employee motivation, quality performance and service delivery.

“Skills recognition and certification initiatives in the informal economy through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes will provide an important pathway for the 90 per cent of Indians who work in the so-called unorganized sector” (NCEUS Report, 2009).

Guided by the principle of Antyodaya, Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education is dedicated to empowering the poor, marginalised and those left behind in order to transform their quality of life and contribute meaningfully towards the nation’s economic progress (Raj Nehru).

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