

Mock-3 : English Essay

"Crisis in Academia: Declining Students Interest in Universities"

Outline :

1. Introduction:

1.1. Background

1.2. Thesis Statement: The students

are losing interest in universities, which is a grave concern in academia.

2. What is Academia?

2.1. Definition

2.2. Significance

2.3.

3. Why any crisis in Academia should be addressed?

3.1. Students are the backbone

3.2. Historical significance of Students & Universities in reforms

3.3. Academics are society-shapers

4. Why are Student Interests declining in Uni?

4.1. Expensive Education and Student loans

4.2. Entrepreneurial mindset

4.3. Skills Over Degree

4.4. Consistent Economic instability

4.5. Unemployment and lack of jobs for Graduates.

5. Where are student interests re-directing?

- 5.1. Business over jobs - Entrepreneurs
- 5.2. Role of Social Media
- 5.3. Gen 2 influence on academic qualification
- 5.4. Role of AI & skill based jobs
- 5.5. Role of Covid & layoffs
- 5.6. Quick 'courses' over degrees.

6. Recommendations to bring back Academic success:

- 6.1. Make Education cheaper / affordable
- 6.2. Incentivize having a degree
- 6.3. Improve Economic stability so there is less focus on survival
- 6.4. Bring back 'curiosity' among new generation.

7. Conclusion.

Academics are the thinkers of any society. Imagine a world without Einstein, Newton or Aristotle, Plato or Van Gogh and Picasso, in the end they were all academics. They are the true force of power and reason in a society, they study, research, think and probe so the society can keep learning and growing. Therefore, Academics have held a status of respect, class and admiration since centuries. However, now we see that Students are becoming less and less interested in pursuing a university education, which has caused a stir in the academia world.

Academia ranges from science, arts, music to nature, medicine and sports. It is the institution in society that holds it all together. Till date we remember academics and their contributions, which has helped this society grow and evolve. Throughout history, both literary and political - we see how academics have contributed towards reforms, regime changes, oppression etc through their protests and work. Which is why academia holds a lot of significance in a society.

The presence of Academia, its liberty to produce, research and keep-in-check information is the testament of a democratic state. For any state that believes in the welfare of their people, students act as their backbone. Mainly 'youth' is comprised of students, which is why their focus on academics is very important. If we look at history or even present times, students from Harvard, Yale, Brown, Oxford and other prestigious universities have had the most protests for the genocide in Palestine.

The academics shape your society by keeping political powers in check. They are the better educated and well-informed who speak up for their rights and remind the elite powers their constitutional and political rights which is why it's important in the society that this body continues its work of monitoring as well as producing more knowledge.

The reasons which have contributed significantly towards making students move away from universities are many. We shall briefly discuss the main ones which are: expensive education, Entrepreneurial mindset, Skills over Degree and economic

instability.

Education used to hold a prestige among the public. It was considered noble and desired!

However now it has become another capitalistic venture. The price of education, specially in university has significantly increased. Students are no longer willing to pay so much fees when they do not even have the promise of a job towards the end.

The Student loan have left many of their parents and older generation in crippling debt. So now they refuse to be part of the problem.

An answer, out of this debt, has been the new wave of 'entrepreneurial mindset' among youngsters. They prefer to dedicate themselves to businesses ~~than to~~ that can make them money than invest so many years and money into ~~an~~ academic qualifications.

A by-product of this mindset has been the recent emphasis of 'Skill over Degree' in the Job market. Employers are now more focused if one has skills rather than a piece of paper or a GPA. This focus on skills has enabled a lot of students to skip dedicating years to a 'Degree', develop required skill in some months and land a job.

The recent shift in Job Market requirements is also because of the economic instability youth today is facing. The cost of living has never been this high before. Around 1 out of 4 youngsters can afford buying a house as compared to 1975, when 4 out of 4 youngsters could buy a house. The economic instability has pushed students into 'survival mode' where they prioritize making money and becoming stable more so than investing in education and pursuing interests.

Unemployment is also a contributor towards this trend. The students who have graduated from universities are not only under student loan but also are unemployed. This does not help encourage the youth to explore academic interests.

Keeping all these points in mind, it is imperative to discuss where the student interests are going if they are swayed away from education.

Firstly, as discussed above, students are more eager to develop a business than work a job. To have a business, you do not require an academic qualification.

Secondly, there is a huge role social media has played towards this. The increasing use

and influence of Social Media has opened new opportunities for people. Businesses have found a new platform to utilize while people have become 'brand' themselves calling it 'influencers'. When students see their peers earning six digits on social media by promoting some products, they are less likely to want to pursue education which may or may not land them a job.

A lot of this new debate or behavior towards University education is the influence of Gen Z and their unique way of perceiving things. Gen Z believe to have learned from previous generations and don't believe in 'corporate slavery' or the idea of 'owning a home' and 'student loans'. They believe in making money to survive and have a good time. This attitude has led to more comfort based easy jobs - such as work from home etc.

AI has also played a great role in furthering Gen Z influence. The recent wave of AI and ChatGPT models have influenced more focus on skill based job opportunities than formal education.

Covid and the layoffs exposed how fragile the economy is and that there is no job security.

The ideas of 'work from home' and 'wasteful degrees

Started gaining more popularity post COVID.

The choice of spending 6 months taking a course from websites like 'Udemy' or 'Coursera' seems more plausible to students than spending years.

After all this discussion, the question arises that what can one do to shift the focus back towards academics. There are a couple of things that can be done, such as making education affordable, improving economic situation, incentivizing a degree and encouraging curiosity in students again.

The problem does not seem like students have lost interest in studies, rather it seems like the high cost of an education does not provide them with enough return. There needs to be more ~~sto~~ scholarship programs that are govt funded, and overall the education needs to be made more affordable.

There should be some incentive for completing your academic education, either it could be some cash prizes or a secured job position promised towards the end of the degree program. The universities need to invest in students more after graduation.

Any improvement in the economic state of the people will reflect in latest trends. If students are not concerned with their survival or their ~~own~~ economic condition — there would be more flux of students pursuing education in subjects of their interest.

This also blends into the next point of encouraging 'curiosity' in students again by using AI and Social Media. The more eager they are to learn or become truly professionals at something the more academic interest they will garner.

To conclude, the students are no longer investing in university education ~~which~~ because of its inaffordability and uselessness in the job market. However, academia remains a strong pillar of the community therefore focus on bringing interest towards education back ~~to~~ should be of utmost importance.