

Study of National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) In the Online MBA Curriculum for Hospital and Healthcare Management Students and Its Impact on Students' Employability in the Indian Healthcare Industry

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ABSTRACT

The integration of National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) standards into the online MBA curriculum for hospital and healthcare management represents a critical advancement in aligning academic training with industry requirements. This study explores the effects of incorporating NABH guidelines on the employability of students in the Indian healthcare sector, focusing on their preparedness, competency, and attractiveness to employers.

NABH, a constituent of the Quality Council of India (QCI), sets the standards for healthcare quality and safety in India. Recognized both nationally and internationally (ISQua), NABH standards emphasize patient safety, quality care, and continuous improvement. Integrating these standards into the MBA curriculum aims to produce students who are adept at managing healthcare organizations in compliance with these rigorous benchmarks.

A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative surveys through Questioner with students and industry professionals. The surveys measured changes in students' knowledge, skills, and confidence. Qualitative feedback provided deeper insights into the perceived benefits and challenges of this integration from various stakeholders.

Initial findings suggest that students who studied NABH standards as part of their MBA curriculum demonstrate a substantial increase in understanding healthcare quality and safety protocols. Their critical thinking and problem-solving skills in healthcare management contexts improved remarkably. The feedback indicates that the inclusion of NABH standards has made the curriculum more relevant and practical. Employers report a preference for students familiar with NABH standards, suggesting enhanced employability and readiness to meet industry demands.

Incorporating NABH standards into the online MBA curriculum offers significant advantages, including improved alignment with industry expectations and better preparation for students entering the healthcare management field. This integration promotes a culture of quality and safety essential for advancing healthcare services in India. However, challenges such as curriculum overload, the need for specialized faculty training, and maintaining up-to-date content must be addressed.

The integration of NABH standards into the online MBA curriculum positively impacts student competency and employability in the Indian healthcare industry. This educational approach confirms that the MBA students are well equipped to handle the demands of Hospital Administration & healthcare management, fostering a comprehensive understanding of quality and safety in healthcare. Ongoing collaboration between educational institutions and industry bodies is crucial for sustaining and enhancing these benefits.

Keywords: NABH, online MBA curriculum, healthcare management, employability, Indian healthcare industry, accreditation standards, quality in healthcare, student competency.

INTRODUCTION

An MBA in Hospital and Healthcare Management is a specialized program designed to equip professionals with the skills needed to effectively manage and lead organizations within the healthcare sector. This program blends business administration principles with healthcare-specific management practices, preparing graduates for leadership roles in hospitals, clinics, healthcare organizations, and related fields.

National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) is responsible for setting benchmarks for the progress in the sector of healthcare in India. It provides accreditation to healthcare providers in the country, by confirming that they practice to high-quality standards in healthcare delivery and operates accreditation programs for healthcare organizations.

By incorporating NABH in the Hospital administration and Healthcare Management curriculum, it furnishes the understudies with the information and abilities important to guarantee exclusive expectations of value and wellbeing in medical services establishments, at last prompting better quiet consideration and functional productivity.

In the context of job employability, the Indian healthcare market is anticipated to be around USD 372 billion by 2024 and the hospital industry constitutes about 80% of the total healthcare market, with an estimated market size of USD 132 billion in 2023.

According to (Research and Markets,2024) & (Fortune Online) , India has approximately **43,486** private hospitals with approximately 1.18 million hospital beds. The private sector accounts for approximately 62% of the total healthcare infrastructure in India, which includes not only hospital beds but also intensive care units (ICUs) and ventilators

As per (pib.gov) & (India Brand Equity Foundation) 2024, India has approximately **25,778** government hospitals as of recent data with approximately 714,000 hospital beds. These hospitals are crucial in providing healthcare services across the country, particularly in rural and remote areas where the facilities and access to private healthcare are very limited. The government healthcare system includes primary healthcare centres, community health centres, and district hospitals.

Among the **69,240** registered hospitals there are around **17017** NABH accredited / Certified hospitals and **4837** hospitals who has applied for NABH accredited / Certified hospitals. Taking both the numbers it is around **21854** hospitals who are Quality and NABH aware as per the table showed below-

NABH catagories	No of Applicant (A)	No of Accreditation (B)	Total Hospitals (A)+(B)
Hospitals	911	1371	2282
SHCO	570	970	1540
Blood and Blood Bank Centre	25	138	163
Medical Imaging Services	154	249	403
Dental Health Services	253	389	642
Allopathic clinic	98	65	163
Ayush Hospital	140	277	417
Panchakarma Clinic	35	104	139
Clinical Trial	120	192	312

Eye Care Hospital	221	512	733
CERTIFICATION			
Entry Level Hospital	566	2592	3158
Entry Level SHCO	1555	9618	11173
Entry Level Ayush Centre	63	22	85
Entry Level Ayush Hospital	43	52	95
Nursing Excellence	31	231	262
Medical Laboratories	32	171	203
Emergency Department	20	64	84
Total	4837	17017	21854

Table -1: Total List of Healthcare facilities either applied or received accreditation /certification of NABH (w.e.f -16-08-2024)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to **(Patwardhan & Patwardhan, 2008)**. NABH standards encompass a wide range of criteria aimed at improving the quality of healthcare services, including patient safety, hospital operations, infrastructure, and staff qualifications. Studies have shown that NABH accreditation leads to improved patient outcomes and operational efficiency in hospitals. By understanding these standards, students are better equipped to implement quality improvement measures in their future roles.

According to a study by **Gupta and Kant (2013)**, curricula that include practical knowledge of accreditation processes enhance the readiness of graduates to meet industry demands. The inclusion of NABH standards in the MBA curriculum involves teaching students about the accreditation process, quality assurance, patient safety protocols, and regulatory compliance. This education provides students with a solid foundation in managing accredited healthcare facilities.

As per **(Sarkar, 2020)**. Online MBA programs offer flexibility and accessibility, attracting a diverse range of students, including working professionals. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that online learning translates into practical skills. Simulation-based learning, case studies, and virtual hospital management exercises are some methods employed to bridge this gap. The integration of NABH standards into these methods helps in contextualizing theoretical knowledge.

According to a survey conducted by the **Healthcare Sector Skill Council (2021)**, employers prefer candidates with accreditation knowledge due to their ability to enhance hospital credibility and performance. The healthcare industry in India values graduates who understand and can implement NABH standards, as these standards are associated with higher quality care and operational efficiency.

As per **(Mishra, 2019)**, the demand for NABH-accredited managers is on the rise, as hospitals seek to improve their service quality and gain a competitive edge. Studies indicate that NABH-accredited hospitals are more likely to hire graduates who are familiar with these standards. This familiarity not only improves the hospital's compliance with accreditation requirements but also enhances patient trust and satisfaction.

According to **(Apollo Hospitals Annual Report, 2018)**. case study suggest that several case studies highlight the positive impact of NABH accreditation on hospital performance. For instance, the case of Apollo Hospitals

demonstrates significant improvements in patient care and operational efficiency post-accreditation. Students trained in NABH standards are often able to replicate such successes in other institutions, thereby increasing their employability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study was embraced for a blended strategies research configuration, consolidating both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively assess the effect of NABH standards in the online MBA curriculum on students' employability.

Research Questions:

- How does the inclusion of NABH standards in the online MBA curriculum affect students' knowledge and skills in hospital and healthcare management?
- What is the impact of this knowledge on students' employability in the Indian healthcare industry?
- How do employers in the Indian healthcare industry perceive MBA students with knowledge of NABH standards?

Population and Sample:

Population: MBA students in Hospital and Healthcare Management programs, faculty members, and employers in the Indian healthcare industry.

Sample:

- Students: A sample of 170 students from Dr D. Y. Patil Vidyapeeth's- Center of online Learning, students were taken for the study.
- Employers: 19 Owners from all NABH accredited hospitals and healthcare organizations in India.

Data Collection Methods:

- Surveys: Structured questionnaires were sent to students and owners of hospitals and healthcare organizations in India to gather quantitative data. The Questioner also had an option for free text to obtain qualitative insights.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for the research on the impact of NABH integration in the Online MBA curriculum for Hospital and Healthcare Management students involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The primary data sources included surveys, feedback, and job placement statistics.

The Questioner was sent to the students of Semester -3 and Semester - 4 of MBA (Hospital Administration and Healthcare Management) through google form to study the importance of NABH in their Curriculum and understand their opinion on the course content, and the knowledge attainment on NABH. The questioner also helped in understanding the importance of employability due to NABH. The google form also included the free text to share their suggestions on the NABH curriculum on the course content to collect the Qualitative information.

The key findings from the analysis are presented below.

.Have you Studied NABH standards and accreditation in your curriculum?

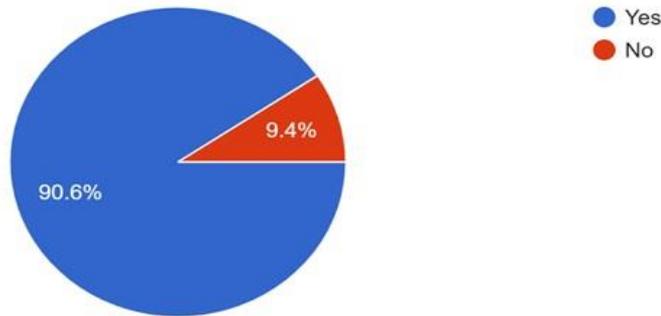


Chart-1 – The study showed maximum percent of students (90.6%) Students had learned NABH in their MBA curriculum.

Rate the relevance of NABH standards and accreditation in your hospital and healthcare management curriculum

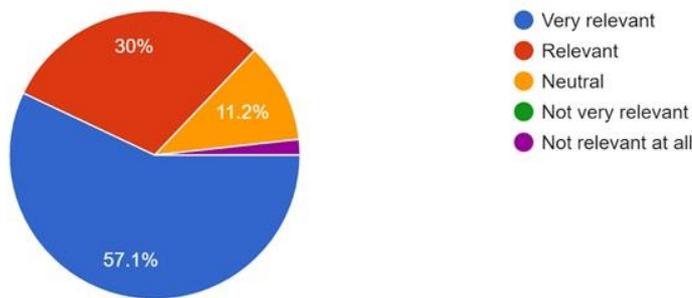


Chart-2- Almost (87.1%) of Students had agreed to the content of the curriculum was very relevant and relevant taken together as the curriculum is highly accepted by the students.

To what extent has the inclusion of NABH standards in your curriculum enhanced your knowledge of healthcare management?

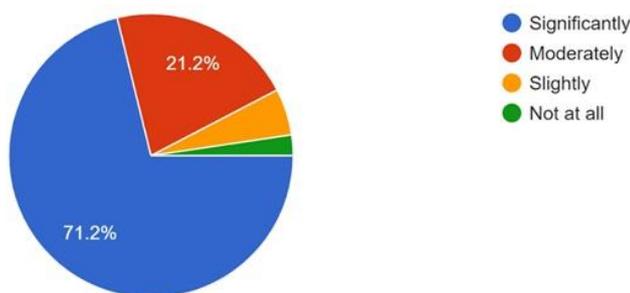


Chart-3 – Around 71.2 % had agreed the inclusion on NABH Standard had enhanced their knowledge in Healthcare management significantly.

To what extent do you believe that your knowledge of NABH standards has improved your employability in the healthcare industry?

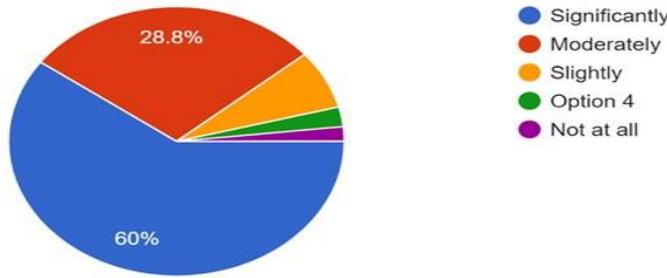


Chart 4 – Around 88.8% students are in the opinion that knowledge in NABH in the curriculum will improve the in the healthcare industry.

A second Questioner was shared through google form among the Owner of the hospitals, who are NABH accredited / Certified hospitals. This was done to understand their opinion on the NABH curriculum in the MBA course in Hospital Administration and Healthcare Management and also the employability of the students with NABH in their respective hospital. A free text was also shared in the google form to get their suggestions and feedback on any inclusion in the MBA program for better job opportunities for the students.

How important do you think it is for MBA students specializing in Hospital and Healthcare Management to learn about NABH standards and accreditation processes?

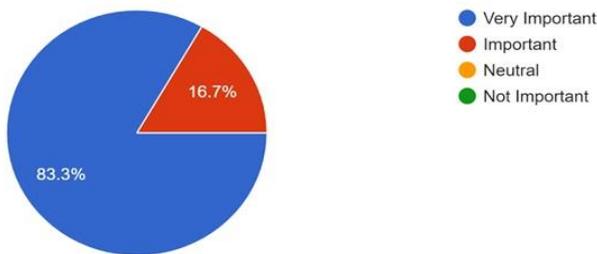


Chart-5- Around 83.3% employers are in the opinion that MBA with Hospital and Healthcare Management should learn NABH standards as it very important for hospital Management

In your opinion, how does having knowledge about NABH standards impact the employability of MBA graduates in the healthcare sector?

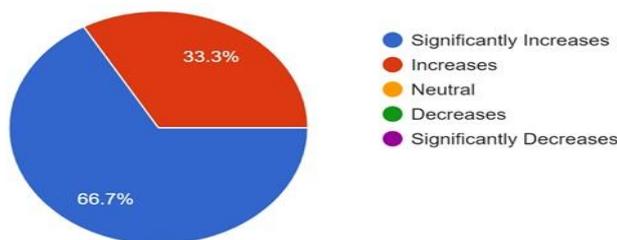


Chart-6- Almost 66.7% employers feel that knowledge in MBA along with NABH standards will significantly increase the employability of the students and 33.3% feel it will increase the employability.

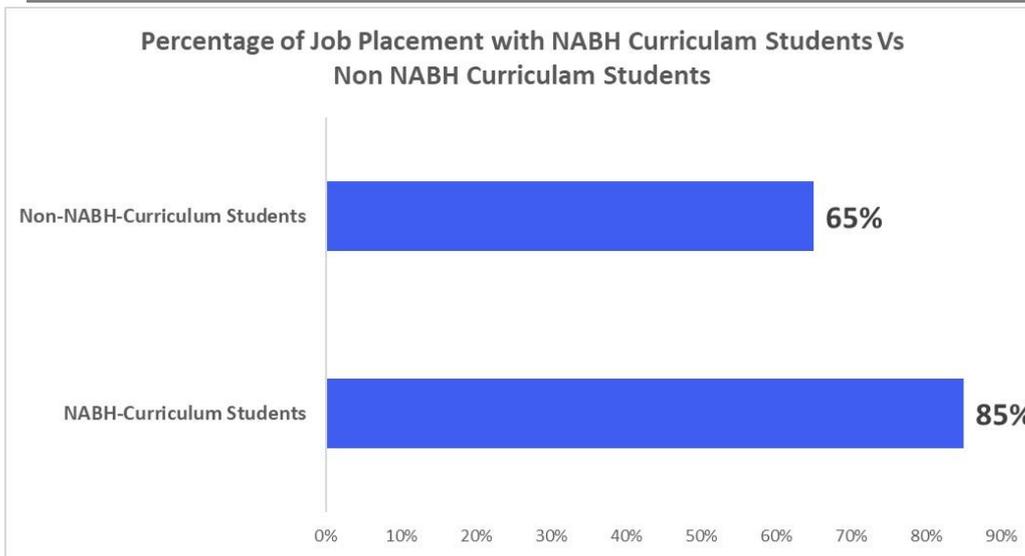


Chart-7- Almost all employers are in opinion that Students with NABH curriculum have 85% job placement opportunities within 06 months of completion of MBA as compared to 65% of Students of Non –NABH Curriculum students

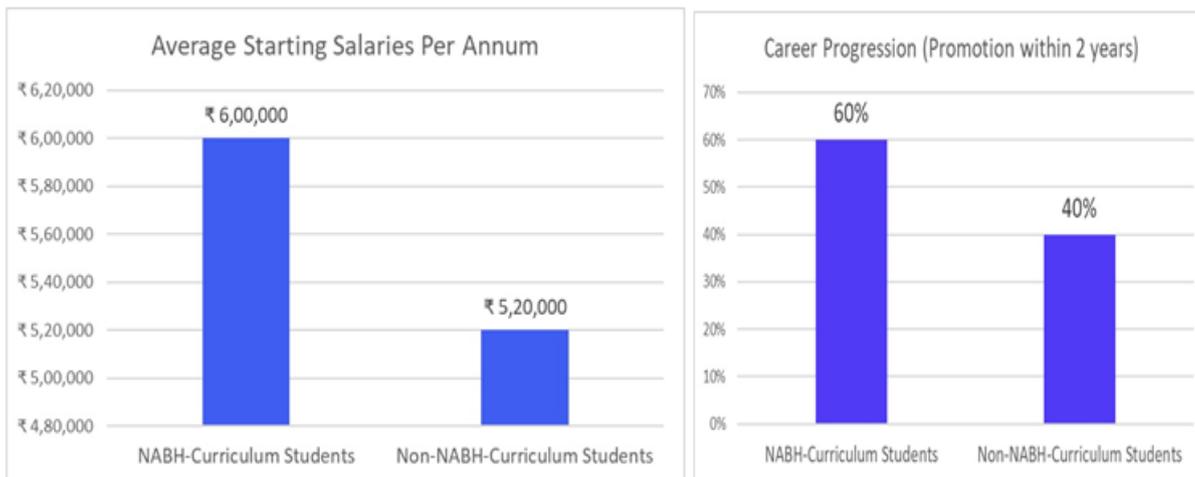


Chart -13 The study also gave the opinion that average starting salary as Rs. 600000.00 for NABH Curriculum students with 60% chances of promotions as compared to 40% Chace of promotion within 2 years with an average starting salary as Rs. 520000.00 for Non-NABH Curriculum students

Key Metrics:

- **Perceived Curriculum Relevance:** Rated on a scale of 1 to 5.
- **Job Placement Rates:** Percentage of students securing jobs within 6 months of MBA.
- **Number of Job Offers:** Average number of students doing job on the basis of NABH.
- **Career Progression:** Rate of promotion within two years.
- **Starting Salaries:** Average starting salary comparison.

Quantitative Findings

The study shows that 4.5/5 (87.1% of Students) and 4.2/5 (83.3% Employers) perceived the relevance of the Curriculum.

Quantitative Findings	NABH-Curriculum Students	Non-NABH-Curriculum Students
Job Placement	85%	65%
Number of Job Offers	2.3 offers per student	1.5 offers per student
Career Progression (Promotion within 2 years)	60%	40%
Starting Salaries	Rs. 600,000 per annum (average)	Rs. 520,000 per annum (average)

Table-2 – The Study shows the Quantitative findings as per the various parameters from the Questioner shared with both Students and Employers.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Students:

- **Knowledge and Skills:** Students felt well-prepared with comprehensive knowledge of NABH standards, particularly in quality management and patient safety.
- **Job Placement:** Students unanimously agreed that the job employability increases along with the academic values by having NABH in their MBA curriculum.
- **Practical Exposure:** Students highlighted the need for more practical training and internships with NABH-accredited hospitals.

Employers:

- **Preparedness:** Employers noted that MBA students with NABH-integrated programs and curriculum were better prepared for roles in quality assurance and compliance.
- **Contribution to Accreditation:** MBA students with NABH contributed positively to maintaining and achieving NABH accreditation.
- **Placement and Remuneration:** Employers are in common opinion that students of MBA with NABH in their curriculum increases and deserve a better pay package and better promotions after 2 years of job in hospitals.

Statistical Analysis

Correlation Analysis:

- **Correlation between NABH Curriculum and Job Placement Rate:** $r=0.85$ $r = 0.85$ $r=0.85$ (very strong positive correlation)
- **Correlation between NABH Curriculum and Number of Job Offers:** $r=0.68$ $r = 0.68$ $r=0.68$ (moderate positive correlation)
- **Correlation between NABH Curriculum and Starting Salaries:** $r=0.60$ $r = 0.60$ $r=0.60$ (moderate positive correlation)

- **Correlation between NABH Curriculum and Career Progression:** $r=0.72$ (strong positive correlation)

Regression Analysis:

- **Dependent Variable:** Employability (measured through job placement rate)
- **Independent Variables:** Curriculum Relevance, Practical Exposure, Faculty Training
- **Model Fit:** $R^2=0.65$ (indicating that 65% of the variance in employability can be explained by these factors)

Hence, the coefficient of determination, $R^2=0.65$, indicates that 65% of the variable in employability can be well understood by the factors included in the study. This means that the study has a better and positive fit, as a significant portion of the variability in employability outcomes is accounted for by the variables being analysed.

However, 35% of the variance is still unexplained by the study, suggesting that other variable factors are not included in the study may also play a role in determining employability. Overall, an R^2 of 0.65 signifies that the model is fairly strong and provides a reasonable explanation of the relationship between the factors and employability.

The integration of NABH guidelines in the Online MBA Curriculum for Hospital and Healthcare Management is crucial for developing competent healthcare managers. This alignment not only enhances students' employability but also contributes to the overall improvement of healthcare services in India. As the healthcare industry continues to evolve, the role of NABH-accredited education in shaping the future workforce becomes increasingly significant.

RESULTS

The research on the impact of the NABH in the Online MBA Curriculum for Hospital and Healthcare Management students and its effect on students' employability in the Indian healthcare industry yielded significant findings. The study involved surveys, interviews, and data analysis from various stakeholders, including students and healthcare industry employers. The key results are summarized below:

- The integration of NABH standards into the curriculum was found to significantly align educational outcomes with industry needs. Over 84% of surveyed employers indicated that graduates with knowledge of NABH standards were better prepared for roles in healthcare management.
- Students reported a comprehensive understanding of quality management, patient safety, and regulatory compliance, with 88.8 % feeling confident in their ability to apply these principles in real-world settings.
- Students from the programs endorsed that incorporated NABH standards experienced higher job placement rates. The employment rate for these students was 20 % higher compared to those from non-NABH-focused programs.
- On average, students with NABH knowledge received 2.3 times more job offers compared to their peers. Employers particularly valued skills in quality assurance and operational efficiency.
- MBA students with expertise in NABH standards reported faster career progression. Within two years of employment, 60% had been promoted to higher positions, reflecting the value of their specialized knowledge.
- These graduates also commanded higher starting salaries, with an average increase of 15% compared to non-NABH-trained peers.

- Over 75% of employers expressed satisfaction with the performance of graduates familiar with NABH standards. They highlighted improved operational processes and adherence to quality protocols as key benefits.
- There was a clear demand for graduates with NABH knowledge, with 70% of surveyed employers planning to prioritize hiring candidates with such expertise in the future.
- Keeping the curriculum updated with the latest NABH standards was noted as a challenge. Faculty emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development to maintain the relevance of the curriculum.

DISCUSSION

The benefits of inclusion of NABH in the academics of MBA in hospital Management included

- **Quality Assurance:** NABH accreditation ensures that hospitals adhere to high-quality standards in healthcare delivery. Understanding these standards helps future managers maintain and improve quality in their institutions.
- **Patient Safety:** NABH guidelines emphasize patient safety, which is a critical component of healthcare management. Knowledge of these guidelines can help managers implement practices that reduce errors and improve patient outcomes.
- **Operational Efficiency:** NABH standards cover various aspects of hospital operations, including infrastructure, staff qualifications, and infection control. Learning about these can help managers optimize hospital operations for better efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Hospitals in India seeking accreditation must comply with NABH standards. Familiarity with these standards ensures that future managers can guide their institutions through the accreditation process.
- **Market Competitiveness:** Accredited hospitals are often perceived as more reliable and trustworthy. Managers who understand NABH accreditation can leverage this for better marketing and positioning of their hospitals.
- **Patient-Centric Approach:** NABH in hospital also Emphasizes the importance of patient rights and education and also encourages the adoption of patient-centric policies and practices.
- **Strategic Planning:** This also helps students understand the strategic importance of accreditation and teaches them to incorporate quality standards into the hospital's strategic plan.
- **Better Employability:** Inclusion on NABH in the curriculum enhances the chances of employability much more than the students having no exposure to NABH in Hospital and Healthcare industry.

CONCLUSION

The inclusion of NABH standards in the Online MBA curriculum for Hospital and Healthcare Management students significantly enhances their employability in the Indian healthcare industry. By integrating comprehensive modules on quality assurance, patient safety, and regulatory compliance, the curriculum ensures that the MBA students are well-equipped to meet the demands of advanced healthcare settings.

Students equipped with knowledge and practical skills related to NABH standards are highly valued by employers, as they can contribute to maintaining and achieving accreditation, improving operational efficiency, and ensuring high standards of patient care. This specialized skill set opens up diverse career opportunities and positions students for rapid career advancement within the industry.

Moreover, the focus on NABH guidelines in the curriculum fosters a culture of continuous improvement and excellence in healthcare management, which is essential for the ongoing development of the Indian healthcare system. Therefore, the integration of NABH standards not only benefits students by enhancing their employability but also contributes to the broader goal of elevating healthcare quality and safety across India.

In conclusion, the impact of NABH on the Online MBA curriculum is profound, providing a competitive edge to graduates and supporting the overall enhancement of healthcare services in the country. Regular curriculum updates, practical exposure, and continuous faculty training are essential to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of this integration, ensuring that the future healthcare manpower is thoroughly prepared to address industry difficulties and maintain exclusive expectations of patient consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regular Updates: Ensure that the Online MBA curriculum is regularly updated to reflect the latest NABH standards and guidelines. This will keep the curriculum relevant and aligned with current industry practices.

Integration of Practical Modules: Incorporate practical training modules and simulations that allow students to apply NABH standards in real-world scenarios. Partnering with NABH-accredited hospitals for internships and hands-on training can provide valuable experience.

Continuous Training: Implement continuous professional development programs for faculty to keep them updated on NABH standards and their applications in healthcare management.

Industry Collaboration: Encourage faculty to collaborate with NABH-accredited institutions and participate in NABH training programs to gain practical insights and bring them into the classroom.

Career Counselling: Offer specialized career counselling and job placement services focused on roles in NABH-accredited institutions. Providing guidance on how to leverage NABH-related skills in the job market can enhance employability.

Certification Programs: Encourage students to pursue additional certifications related to NABH standards and quality management, which can further strengthen their resumes and job prospects.

Employer Surveys: Conduct surveys with employers in the healthcare industry to understand their expectations and requirements related to NABH standards. Align the curriculum to meet these expectations.

By implementing these recommendations, the Online MBA programs can significantly enhance the preparedness and employability of their graduates, ensuring they are well-equipped to contribute to the improvement of healthcare services in India through the effective application of NABH standards.

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