
MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN INDIA – ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

“The higher education segment is expected to undergo intense changes and activities in terms of foreign partnerships and foreign players entering the market in the coming years, with Indian players rejuvenating and improvising their methodology, technology and course content to match the competition.

The changes are not only in the form of the educational improvisations but the very basics are going to take a shift – a gradual shift. I am of the opinion that the people in the field of education are now working on a system which shall be able to predict whether a learner can tackle a given problem or not, and what resources would help the learner deal with it. This would also be a tool for the educator who wants to deeply personalize the teaching experience. Besides what's a novel technology for another.

The other big changes in our education system have been made through the technology has changed different verticals and roles such as marketing, financial services, consulting and others, thus bringing about noticeable changes in the overall education system. In last 100 years, education structures are following the same pedagogy such as lecturers, home assignments, projects and other theoretical assignments. Authors of this article have attempted to suggest various aspect of higher education such as faculty curriculum. It is a conceptual paper based on experiments, views & references material like journals, newspaper and periodicals.

Keywords: *Management Education, Careers, Managers, Professionals and Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of management education was born in the United States in the early 20th century, and is now close to being 100 years old. It has had an interesting lifetime and many ups and downs, but today it stands at the crossroads.

Proponents have argued that management education is essential to success in business and careers. Critics point out to the fact that it is among the more academically weak degrees and that it is not a differentiating factor any more. So, is it worthwhile pursuing management education? What do management education programmes have to do to overcome these barriers and criticisms? What does management education teach and what should it teach?

Management education has become more a curriculum driven activity than field activity. Young managers from B-schools have been drained by the institution in their respective areas with greater focus on theoretical orientation like presentation of case studies, understanding and analyzing problems from historical reports, etc. But in reality, various industries the students would eventually serve are facing different challenges, which need to be addressed.

Trainers in B-schools, or the so-called faculty, are more oriented towards academics than industry. With a few exceptions, most of the faculty members in B-schools have virtually no industry exposure.

In recent times, there has been a growing demand for management and commerce education the number of B-schools who offer such courses is also increasing. A reality check would reveal that the demand is essentially due to the diminishing appeal of technical education, as industries today need marketing professionals at operational levels to sell their products.

There are also stringent statutory regulations on B-schools imposed by bodies like UGC, AICTE, affiliated universities and government. As a result, the admission process of a B-school is closely monitored, its recruitment procedure strictly regulated. The statutory bodies also insist that B-schools must recruit more PhDs amongst its faculties and usually its head – principal or director – must also hold a doctoral degree. Though the faculty members, no doubt bring strong academic experience to the table, the question over their corporate and industry exposure would still remain. This scrutiny is important, because the teachers are handed the rather unenviable task of fashioning future business leaders.

The more practically – oriented is the learning experience generally the more relevant it is considered by employers, who are the ultimate target of MBA students. This doesn't, however, mean theory must be given lesser importance. In reality, good theory must inform good practice.

In an effort to address the challenge, some schools try to focus more on functional areas, but in the final analysis business education is becoming increasingly stagnant and unresponsive to new and emerging situations. Surely, we produce experts in particular aspects of management, but they fail to see the real purpose of management education has not been met.

Management education should therefore be based on collective thinking. The primary goal of institutions and their faculty members is to develop managers and trained thinkers. Training people to think is not easy, but it can be taught.

We should tell our students what common mistakes managers make in their thought process, put them in as many situations as we can to make them think, expose them to brilliant thinkers – from Godrej to Gates, Kamat to Nilekani – and push them to diagnose and model their thinking. They can then compare different models and choose the best one for their situation.

The approach should also include training on skills in addition to just the core subjects, international exposure, and workshop based course work focus on social benefits, public policy issues and healthcare. It all adds up to producing people who don't just know what to do, they have all the skills to implement the changes and most importantly, they can think and generate solutions about situations that are not in the textbooks.

Faculty members should create opportunities for students to experience what they are doing. We should deliver lectures based on case on case study, problem solving, experiential learning and simulations. Business school should create highly interactive learning environment where business leaders themselves increasingly interact with students throughout their programme.

GAP IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Today management education in India stands at crossroads. The traditional university structure of educating and training tomorrow's business leaders has become redundant and other means of providing meaningful, relevant, industry oriented education will supplement the current processes in the increasingly diverse and technological global economy. The process of globalization not only demands drastic changes in the traditional educational approach but also stresses a need for introduction of new age employability skills that have more economic value in today's time. Thus, there is a crucial requirement to shape the management education in accordance with the global changes to improve competitiveness and employability of Indian work force.

We all know that competitive advantage can be sustained only through continuous improvement. Organizations also prefer to identify people from within the existing employee pool who have the potential to take on higher responsibilities and develop their capabilities. It is generally seen as a better technique from both an employee retention point of view and makes better economic sense.

Till now, the accepted method of developing these skills and capabilities has been to use short term training programmes to add new skills using management development programmes or distance learning programmes to build capabilities.

Unfortunately, short term programmes tend to disrupt business momentum and are generally available as one size-fits-all approach that offers no customization and has limited industry relevance. There is no other alternative either that can deliver the requirements of organizations, has complete relevance for specific industry verticals and delivers all this without affecting everyday business.

When we look at business management education formats in India, we realize that while business needs have changed, most business management education formats and curricula have

not kept pace. There may have been progress made by some fine institution scattered here and there, and online options, but the change is only incremental and still not completely appropriate.

There's a learning to be shared: management education formats that are relevant during economic upswing cycle are not relevant during the turf. It's not just post-recession sentiments but both business schools and corporate need to take a close and hard look at their offerings.

Managing multiple aspects of a job requires different sets of skills, which were not available in traditional technical education. Management education bridged this much-felt gap it highlighted that business decision are essentially inter-disciplinary and there is no unique solution to business problems. One can only identify several options to tackle a business problem and choose the best alternative according to the available information at that point of time.

Today young professionals are taking leave to study, to invest in their careers. All too often they find that they are joining the industry back at not very different salary brackets-growing cases like these have punctured the value in management education, around which still there is a lot of type.

Globally, the involvement of corporate and leading management institutions in supporting skill and competence building that is industry relevant has become an accepted practice. Various institutes such as the University of Pennsylvania, the Carnegie Mellon University and the Apollo Global have taken up this cause and are providing education customized to the needs of working professionals.

Some recently set up management schools, for instance, have a completely new model of delivering industry relevant, high quality corporate education designed to meet the needs of organizations who are trying to develop capabilities in their employees to enhance business outcomes. The model helps individuals reach the next level in their careers through capability building. They also provide flexibility to working professionals in terms of weekend curricula and central locations (in major corporate hubs)

In these changed and changing, times, young professionals will need to study while working. The study work balance will create a new sense of confidence and develop a risk taking attitude which is the hallmark of entrepreneurs. Management educational institutions will have to offer short duration courses for this audience; it would be most desirable to complete a two year course in just 11 month – the quick or it is, the better for most working students.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The critical difference between life in an Indian university and a university in the west arises out of the concept of knowledge embedded in system. The crude measures our regulatory bodies

such as the UGC apply in the name of accountability mask the epistemic sterility of the curriculum, the pedagogic process and examination. In the west, curriculum and pedagogy both follow the teacher's own research interests. Even smaller universities with limited resources attempt to cultivate a research environment. Topics of research reflect the university's concern for the social and natural world surrounding it. Research is seen as an inquiry to solve problems as well as to induct the young into a community of inquiries. Keeping a record of hours spent on direct teaching becomes irrelevant in such a system, even in the case of undergraduate students. To keep their research interests alive and popular, senior professors engage with young undergraduates who bring fresh questions and perspectives to ongoing inquiries. In India, you stop teaching undergraduate classes as soon as you attain professorial status. Teaching and research are seen as two separate activities. While teaching is perceived as institutional work, research is viewed as a personal agenda for moving forward in one's career. Not surprisingly, infrastructure and administrative procedures that might facilitate research project has to struggle all the way to its completion and the ritual of report submission to the funding agency. No one among colleagues or in the administration cares to know the findings, let alone their implications. Teaching goes on following the grooves of preset syllabi, like the needle bring into an old gramophone record. The third critical difference lies in the library. In the west, even in the most ordinary universities, the library forms the centre of life, both for teachers and students. Librarians enjoy a high status as their contribution to academic life cuts across academic disciplines. The work closely with teachers and students in the various tasks involved in procurement of books and journals, keeping the library quiet and friendly and ensuring speedy access. Our case is the opposite. The library exists on the margins of the classroom. In many universities, undergraduate students are not allowed to use the university library. Subscription to journals and magazines has dwindled over the years, and maintenance of past volumes is now seen as an obsolete practice because e-storage is available. We forget that the library is not merely a service. It is also a physical space whose ethos induces the young to learn the meaning of belonging to a community of scholars. Our reading rooms carry unkempt, hapless look with clanking ceiling fans and dog earned books waiting to be removed book acquisition has been saturated with petty corruption and a crowd of spurious publishers has thrived on the outskirts of the academia.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION – The Role of Faculty, Regulator & University

First, we must raise the quality of our universities by promoting research and publications. Not even a single Indian university got featured in the top 200 universities of the world in all major rankings and this is a serious concern second is the issue of attracting quality faculty. There is a crisis relating to faculty recruitment and retention in our universities. Even the central universities are facing difficulty with 35-40% of their faculty positions remaining vacant. Third, there is an urgent need to increase the capacities of the higher education sector. This will involve significant investment in higher education we need to build more colleges and universities but

that should not lead to build to any reduction in quality. This balancing act of maintaining the quality of education while increasing the quantity of institutions is a critical challenge.

The existing dichotomy between public sector efforts and private sector initiatives in the higher education space needs to be dismantled. The yardstick to measure the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions in Indian should not be based on whether it is public or private, but through benchmarks that are universally applicable. There is a need for radical regulatory reform in the higher education sector, and an examination of the powers and functions of all regulatory bodies. The regulations should focus on creating an enable environment for the higher education sector to grow in which public, private and international in situations can thrive all with a view to advancing the goals of excellence in higher education. The need for internationalization and global opportunities in education and research for our students and faculty has to be promoted by the government. Further, we need to address the issue of increasing the gross enrolment ratio from 18 percent to more than 30 percent, and this calls for substantial investment in higher education.

There is no single answer as to how we can transfer knowledge from university to industry. We must understand the importance of collaboration between academia and the industry. Unfortunately, these two worlds have been operating independently with a fair amount of in difference and skepticism of the other this has not helped in any form of knowledge transfer we need to facilitate conversation between academia and industry. It is also necessary for industry to recognize that universities are about creating ideas and promoting innovation, but not all of them can be driven by industry demand and market expectation this balancing act is critical.

CONCLUSION

There is an urgent need for drastic improvement in management of higher education in India. The quality standards are not up to the mark which does not match corporate/industry needs and expectations. The huge gap between management education imported by the higher education institution to be urgently filled up particularly in respect of research faculty excellence and the accountability of the universities and regulators. The top priority should be given by the Management of Higher education to fill up the gap between industry and academia as incorporated in their vision, mission and quality policy.

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