



EMERGING ISSUES OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: AN INDIAN CONTEXT

Ms. Prabani Phukan* Dr. Prajal Bezborah**

**Ph.D. Research Scholar, Center for Management Studies, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, India.*

***Dean, School of Commerce and Management Science, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, India.*

Abstract

In this study an effort has been made to discuss the emerging issues where attention is needed for bringing value and growth in the management education in India. The result is aimed at to meet the demand of globalised village from today's management graduates. Emerging issues are seeking utmost attention for a holistic development of management education to bridge the gap between the institutes' delivery and industry expectations. Organizational reorientation enabled with effective governance and financial and academic autonomy which never compromises with the faculty quality and development is an area to be worked upon by the B-schools. At the same time, the curriculum of the institutes needs to be updated with pedagogical innovation, improvised teaching techniques and customized specialization to suit Indian industry demand. For all these improvisation the main focus is to develop a research environment in the institutes. There is an urgent need to inculcate global mindset to understand the present globalised world expectations from the graduates coming out of the B-schools. Collaborations between industry and B-schools and also, among B-schools play a vital role in answering many difficult queries.

Key words: Management Education, B-school, Globalization, Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Management education is witnessing a sea change world-wide over the last few decades. India, definitely, is not an exception to that fact. The world has shrunk into a global village on account of globalization. The companies all over the world have started working for catering the needs of this global village. In such a scenario, this is very evident that managers of such corporate bodies have to be backed by essential as well as critical skill sets to meet the demand of the diverse work culture. So, it is the duty of the management education providers i.e. the Business Schools or B-schools to have a check on quality improvement needs to meet the demand of the present globalized and dynamic corporate world and bring growth and sustainability to management-education standards.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the emerging issues and areas of management education in India that are responsible for bringing growth and sustainability through quality improvements.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The paper is prepared based on the review of literature to understand the issues, challenges and the need of change. The study by Shaha, G.S. (2012), states that the management education in India is witnessing a major transition through internationalization, cross cultures, strategic alliances, partnership and mergers are new trends in management education. In another study, Nazeer, I (2012) suggested that to meet the need of the present globalized world, the management institutes have to constantly bring relevance and currency to organizations and society at large. In that study it has been found that new reforms and strategies are urgently required for re-engineering of the entire ecosystem of the business education sector. Likewise, Kumar, M. and Jha, S. (2012) emphasized on the fact that there is an urgent need of revitalization of B-school education in India so as to maintain its relevance in the society. They also have stressed upon the fact that survival of these institutions will indeed depend upon how proactive they are with regard to meeting needs of the corporate houses. Shweta and Kumar, M (2011) emphasized on the unique crisis of relevance faced by the management education across globe.

Irala, 2006 makes strong argument about financial and academic autonomy for bringing growth and sustainability in the management education. Rakesh, R (2014) in his study reveals majority of institutes seems to focus on the quality of academic program. This calls for radical research to be undertaken for bringing relevance in the management education to cope with the demanding industry. Gap between faculty expectations and perceptions have been identified by Sahadia, P. and Rajashekar, H (2011) in their study. The findings of their paper indicated that faculty expectations have not been met by their B-schools and this can create serious concerns for B-School top management. Kumar, S. and Dash, M.K. (2011) recommended that management education needs to be holistic, targeted and customized with the aim to remove the gap between industry requirements and academic curriculum. Patil, A.R. (2012) emphasizes on the urgent need of pedagogical innovation in the B-schools to bridge the gap between industry expectations and institute's delivery. Rajen, J. and Khalil, S's (2007) paper suggests that for developing strategic alliances, the business schools have to more effectively use their resources



and infrastructure to reap more benefit from their investments in both people and technology. Kaul, N. (2011) concluded her study saying B-schools in India must be innovative, flexible & responsive to the dictates of the changing environment. Manimala, M.J.(2006) brings out the differentiating practices by the top notch B-schools which helps them to stand out.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Based on the review of literature this paper is prepared with following objectives

1. To study the emerging issues of management education in India to find out the relevance of the MBA program in the present globalized world.
2. To study the featured policy orientations of the more effective B-schools based on an analysis of the international best practices in the field.

PRESENT SCENARIO

Management represents the professional administration of business concerns, public undertakings, institutions and organizations of all kinds and efficient utilization of resources for optimizing benefits to all stakeholders. In 21st century, India has witnessed a deep change in educational system where management education has emerged as the most attractive option. As a result of this, private sector has entered in management education and invested courses programs of different institutes which are approved by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education). But, on the contrary scenario management education is losing its magnetism because of some much considerable reasons. It is now very important to consider the fact that the present day scenario demands management of education itself in the B-schools who proclaims to provide management education. Because of the unique crisis of relevance facing by the B-school across the globe it is essential to bring all aspects of management education right from management aspirants and faculty to management and infrastructure including industry relevance to bring under critical scanner.

Management Education is becoming beyond doubt global in terms of content, delivery & reach. There is already much of globalization with major B-schools designing and delivery their programmes with global outlook and focus. In that outlook entry of foreign B- schools into India and expansion of our B- schools outside India are also becoming a common trend. The history and growth pattern of B-schools in India makes it evident that India has seen a mushrooming growth in various sectors since 1990s with many Multi-National Companies making its entry into India, which in turn has created job opportunities which require ready to jell in graduates to fit in their demanding work culture. To meet the demand of B-School graduates a flourishing number of management schools have opened up in the past decade or so. The enrollment capacity of management education in India has crossed 385000 a year, but of those institutes only a handful of them features in the top 100 B-schools in the world. In an interview taken by DNA agency, Dr. Dinesh D. Harsolekar, Director, Indian Education Society's Management College and Research Centre has told that as per a recent report on IIMs placements, which are the premier management institutes in the country, still have 10% students unplaced. This situation leads us to the question of how important it is to manage the education sector in India especially in the B-schools so that we don't compromise quality over quantity.

EMERGING ISSUES: HOW RELEVANT IS THE MBA?

Masters of business administration (MBA) programs are being met with escalating criticism from academics, students, and various organizational stakeholders. Central to these criticisms is the contention that the MBA is wholly out-of-touch with the "real world" and is irrelevant to the needs of practicing managers (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009). In this study, an effort has been made to find out the emerging issues to do away with the criticism and bring growth as well as sustainability to the management education in India. This section discusses a number of issues that are relevant to management education in general and management education in India in particular.

1. Organizational Reorientation

In most of the B-schools in India, organizational change is desirable, but difficult to manage especially when it is accompanied by controversy and conflict. One of the main building block in Indian management education is that the power mostly vests with the owners/promoters or managers of the institution, be it a private institution or a public or government owned institution. An effective system of governance shares powers with the intellectual capital of the system, creates conditions for voluntary academic contribution, provides opportunity for teachers' growth, extends academic freedom in measured terms, and this inspires the faculty members towards inspirational teaching (Nazeer, 2012). That synergy is missing in most of the institutes in India. AICTE is concerned about the regulatory norms. Therefore governance and accountability do not seem to have importance in regard to the B-schools which need attention in the present situation.

2. Financial and Academic Autonomy

To bring growth and sustainability under management education, financial autonomy plays the key role. In order that our schools compete with the global players, they have to be autonomous at least (Irala, 2006). This autonomy talks about autonomy to hire and compensate and assess faculty, to decide on pedagogy along with the freedom to charge competitive fee. This would lead to adequate funds for research, material development, faculty development, etc. But, to ensure that such autonomy is not misuse, there should be strict vigil by a competent body.

Where financial autonomy plays the key role among one of the many facts of autonomy, academic autonomy is the driver. To cope with the demand from the industry the B-schools must have the autonomy to change the curriculum at frequent intervals, hire desired and specialized faculty, redesign pedagogy, student assessment etc. with minimum interference from regulatory body so that institutes can bring the best out the students and produce industry-preferred graduates.

3. Quality Faculty and Faculty Development

Faculty is that pillar of management institute which connects the other two pillars i.e. the students and the industry. So, in literal sense they are the backbone of the institute. That backbone definitely should be the strongest part of the institute to keep it stand tall and straight. It has been evident from many researches that institutes are unable to produce competent faculty to teach in management courses, which created a demand supply gap and resulted in low standard quality of faculty. Institutes are engaged in appointing new faculty member on low salaries and heavy teaching load which further deteriorate their quality and they are left with no time for further development, and involving part time faculty which had little or no involvement with the institutes. Generally, they give lectures prepared from textbooks or their company based experience. The quality of management remained inferior in the sense that they pay not enough attention to application of knowledge, understanding of concepts, and development of managerial skills institutions.

Institutes must pay attention to the holistic development of the industry. Faculty is that section of the whole infrastructure of the management institute without whose growth the growth of the institute is just next to impossible. The faculty development initiative is the key driver for the development of whole educational system. The quality of faculty directly reflects the quality of course design and programme delivery. Poor quality of the faculty doesn't allow innovation & creativity in teaching learning phenomenon. Few important areas which are essential for quality faculty are:

- I. The faculty should be from excellent academic background and faculty selection cum appointment should be only on merit basis. There should be any room for compromise in that factor.
- II. Institutes should give preference for faculty with real-time industry experience accompanied with research and consulting experience apart from teaching experience.
- III. If faculties are hired without industry experience the institute should train them with proper training through corporate collaboration and training programme.
- IV. Faculty should preferably be passionate for teaching who can able to motivate students with excellent communication skills.
- V. The institute should have a proper compensation and incentive plan for making them satisfied with the job.
- VI. Above all, faculties should be strong scholars with an exposure to multiple audiences.

4. Assessment of the Alignment of Required curriculum and Required Managerial Competencies

In management education the medium can be the message. Students can experience the concepts they are learning if the curriculum is organized and run according to the management and organization principles being taught (Romme & Putzel, 2003) .In the reality of contemporary work organizations, managerial capabilities have typically been acquired through informal work experiences. For example, studies show that 70–90% of workplace learning occurs through on-the-job experiences, informal training, and mentoring (Pfeffer & Sutton,2000; Tannenbaum, 1997). In most of the cases there is gap between what is being covered in the course curriculum in the B-schools and what is actually expected from the industry. So, it is the time when a detailed assessment is to be incorporated by the B-schools to align required curriculum and required managerial competencies to bridge the gap between gap between institutes' delivery and industry expectations.

Developing a curriculum is not an easy task. Moreover, the present scenario demands a continuous updated curriculum to keep pace with the advancements which again needs to be periodically reviewed to provide opportunities for meeting the needs of this change driven world. But in most of the Indian universities and B-schools, it takes years to get syllabus revised due to bureaucratic setup and private B-schools also don't show much enthusiasm towards revision of syllabus because it may call for appointing new faculty and updating existing faculty which could be a costly issue. Course content need not just be latest but also country specific .It has been an observed phenomenon that many of the ideas and theories have been

successful in the countries of their origin. We don't have much of Indian specific case studies which could help in bringing the congruence and rationality between what is taught and what is practiced (Kumar & Dash, 2011).

5. Pedagogical Innovations and Teaching Techniques

The need of the hour for the B-schools is to adopt new pedagogies which are more effective to support the curriculum and helps the aspirants to learn 'real-time'. The teaching-learning process in any management education institutions largely depends on the pedagogies been adopted to facilitate and enhance the learning outcomes among the participants. The growing use of new teaching pedagogy like case study teaching, simulations, audio-video tool, etc is providing much needed impetus to the application of various teaching pedagogy. A focus on pedagogy requires a further step: to examine the way that the curriculum is taught, and to consider whether it needs to be adjusted (or 'tuned') to optimize the chances of helping students to develop their employability (Patil, 2012).

In Indian context, majority of the aspirants are fresher without any real time work experience. In such a scenario it is very important for the institutes to adopt pedagogies which give them maximum opportunities to acquire as much practical knowledge as they can.

One of the main challenges a good faculty faces is how to get students actively engaged. Beneficial teaching methods are those that encourage students to debate on the topic on hand, arouse their curiosity, and lead them to ask many questions as a way for them to know the subject in depth. To make sure that the B-schools are preparing the management students to jell in well in the global job market, the interactive learning techniques are essential for optimum involvement of the students in the class. Techniques like questioning skills, use of props, worksheets, and presentation slides and films help to produce interactive lectures. Top B-schools are emphasizing on the fact that the role of a teacher in the class thus needs to be changed to a facilitator or more specifically a team leader who facilitate and lead the team of class for real-time learning. This leads to the concept of cooperative learning. Defining student learning outcomes is a critical first step in course design and technology tools can help to facilitate a more efficient and effective delivery of concepts, ideas, and analyses. Activities such as, management games and projects help students hone their personal as well as professional work skills. These management games give students simulated opportunities to put theories into practice. The simulation technique enables them to learn from each other. A student-centered active learning forces all students to participate in the learning activity. It also helps them fully grasp the benefits of team work in real work situations.

6. Customization of Specialization

Present-day management education demands customization. Every industry has its own set of challenges & dynamics, and it requires specific skill sets and expertise (Kumar & Dash, 2011). An Indian business context has its own specialties and specific difficulties. This could be only done by bringing specialization in concerned field. Management Education has crossed the boundaries of confined areas as Marketing, Finance and Human Resource Management and made its existence in multi-dimensional areas of business such as agricultural services, infrastructure management, contract research, new era entrepreneurship, hospital management, disaster management, infrastructure management, ITES (Information Technology Enabled Service) etc. These areas need faculty specialization, curricula customization, and specific material development. Sadly, these areas are often neglected in India which results into poor quality of management education. It is also essential that material developed for these contexts are used only after material validity. Many a case it is used without examining material validity and correctness.

In this era of intense competition coupled with the changing market, business schools should look at cooperation among the schools themselves. Business school – business school partnerships, and business school – industry partnerships should increase. As students across the country search for educational alternatives to maximize their intellectual and social growth and hence the education institutes should reinvent the concept of customization, specialization and individualization of programs to meet student needs (Kaul, 2011).

7. Constructive Research Environment

In comparison to any other disciplines wherein knowledge generation and its dissemination through education sets direction for application of knowledge in the field, management as a discipline has been a lot more reactive to environment. Therefore, management education demands a much greater emphasis on basic and functional research to deliver quality practice. Indian context, it is evident that the management institute does not have a culture that supports constructive research. Only the top 20-30 schools produce a credible research and publications output. The serious reorientation is needed in this regard. To build a research environment in a management institutes the change of mind setup on the side of management is essential. We generally see lot of investments especially by the private B-schools on advertisement and building brand name, but when the

question comes on the budget of research and innovation, they mostly take a back seat. Management institutes should inculcate proper motivation and interest among faculty for research. This can be done by providing incentives to faculty involved in research, giving due weight age to research activities and providing a good library support system. University Grant Commission has already taken steps in this direction by giving due weight age to research and publication for promotions. This needs to be extended and implemented not only in government universities and institutes, but all institutes imparting business education.

The knowledge generated through research (doctoral or other) will have to be disseminated to all concerned. The principal methods of doing this are to organize academic conferences and seminars as well as encourage faculty and doctoral students to publish their works in the form of research papers and books. It should be admitted that the Indian academic community is generally weak in terms of the quantity as well as quality of their publications. There is a shortsighted view that the time spent on research and publications would not bring any financial gains and that the same time spent on teaching or consulting would be financially more productive. But, in actual research and publications give far higher visibility and reputation to the institution as well as the individual, which would eventually bring in research, consulting and teaching assignments of far greater value.

8. Institute Industry Interaction

Collaboration of Corporate with a reputed Management Institutes should bring out several outcomes and not just end up as a means or hiring the students or providing degrees to the employee (Patil, 2012). Institute Industry Interface is a critical phenomenon for holistic development of B-schools. Institutions should be encouraged to arrange tie ups with business houses. If we notice top notch B-schools, their strengths lies in their industry collaborations. Interaction with the industry is an evolutionary process which in turn can be beneficial in many ways:

- I. Institutes should take initiatives to involve Industry in framing the course curriculum, giving real life projects to the selected faculty and provide infrastructure support to the institute and help to get the best out of the institute.
- II. Good industry bonding could make faculty enthusiastic to work in the industry on training and consultation assignments and use the knowledge and experience to impart more realistic management education to the students.
- III. Institute Industry Collaboration could also help in such as jointly hosting seminars of mutual interest, faculty development programs, faculty conducting regular trainings, induction programs and so on.
- IV. Assessment should also be based on internship authenticity and learning.
- V. Enhancement of industry exposure which will lead to enhancement of experiential learning. Exposing students to real life situations which are more complex, demanding, critical, messy, will bring them closer to reality.

9. Collaboration among B-schools

Many of the emerging needs of B-schools for revitalization of the education and creating sustainability can be met by academic collaborations among various national and foreign institutes. Collaborations among business schools could take the advantage of synergies using the strengths of each to boost each one's competencies. These collaborations could bring opportunities like faculty exchange cum training programmes, student exchange programmes, dual degrees, joint research initiatives, joint infrastructural facility usage and so on. These tie ups might lead to provide opportunities to students to work in cross school teams, faculties could be encouraged for research and leadership in conjunction with university-wide initiatives.

10. Developing a Global Mindset

In this era of globalization which advocates a race for mastering knowledge and skills, learning has become a relative concept. One's success in business education as well as the industry depends upon how fast he/she can acquire knowledge, develop skills and enhance the pace of learning. Managers can be successful in this global world if they develop world class talent which calls for developing a new approach of imparting teaching and learning which is nothing but developing a global mindset. In today's world, the aim of the B-schools should be to produce global managers by creating a distinguished mix of teaching and training.

11. Multiple Outlooks

Today's globalised corporate world demands managers who are skilled with multiple outlooks since technological, organization and personal perspectives need not to align and could differ. Alongside of learning and critical thinking, this era demand technologically skilled managers. Not only that, they should also acquire life skills by the time they graduate from the B-schools such as leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility, emotionally intelligent. Therefore, management education needs re-enactment



with emphasis on explicitly imparting education in regard to political, ethical and philosophical nature of management practice and managers must to focus on interpersonal relationships, feeling, stress, emotional outburst, politics, and difference in opinion and like.

12. Governance and Social Accountability

Lack of proper governance and social accountability is another buzz for Indian B-schools. B-schools are not seems to be very serious with mandatory disclosure by institutions on faculty qualification, books and journals in library, computer labs, placement records and other required information that could be useful for student while choosing institutions. According to UGC norms institutes have to display this all information on internet but there is big difference between actual and information displayed on internet or filed with concerned statutory bodies. There is a need to introduce independent audit committees for managing the B-schools. While talking about bringing sustainability to the B-schools educations, it is essential also encourage social accountability and environmental responsibility and inculcate the skills enabling business school graduates to take up business, community and environmental issues at all levels.

13. Alumni Association and Allied Activities

It is an unhidden truth that B-schools that alumni network is filled opportunities which if effectively utilized, can generate academic and financial resources for themselves and thereby improve the quality of their offerings. Past students of business schools always have a special affection towards the institution. Those who are in high positions in the corporate sector can effectively help the institute with guest lectures by corporate executives, student projects and research work, student placements, subscription to executive education programmes, endowments, research chairs and scholarships, financial support for physical assets, and many other allied activities. Although all these tremendous support could be availed from alumni association, there are very few institutes which are using this resource effectively.

A check for quality improvement: What do top notch B-schools do differently?

In this section an attempt has been made to summarize the above discussion and to list out the featured policy orientation of the more effective B-schools based on an analysis of the international best practices in the field of management education:

Top B-schools positioning is always there first priority. They prefer creating a niche than to compete with enormous number of other players by positioning in a mass-market. By focusing on differentiating them in terms of specializations in subject areas, methodologies, market segments, etc., they try to elucidate their objectives and mission more precisely and align their activities in line with them. They take utmost care to be a focus for and keep hold of best lot of faculty. They believe in providing best quality facilities for the faculty and always focus on their growth and development in both personal and professional terms through consultancy, research projects, conferences and publications. This would imply that the workload norms and performance evaluation should enable and encourage them to take up different types of activities rather than spend all their time in the classroom. In order to facilitate this, there has to be a flexible system of compensation based on the contribution made by the individuals, with a sharing system for the extra income, so that it would be beneficial to both the individual as well as the institution (Manimala, 2006). In this way both the parties i.e. institute and the faculty can be benefited in terms of mutual professional development and financial gain.

They never are very specific about their choice of incoming students. For considerations such as financial capabilities, society affiliations, reservations, influential connections, favoritism etc., they never choose to negotiate on the quality of the aspirants. Instead, we can observe a conscious effort to bring diversity among the students as well as the faculty so that they can promote better learning through interaction. These diversity could be in terms of their educational backgrounds, experience, community affiliation, region of origin, language groups, and nationality or any other.

These B-schools take enormous effort to involve all stakeholders in different fronts as they believe that the primary means of improving quality is to have regular interaction with all stakeholders and that the more and more activities would lead to value enrichment in the long-run. This would again lead to meet the demand of the dynamic and multi-dimensional management education. They maintain constant interaction with all the stakeholders especially the practicing world. The latter are involved mainly in two ways (Manimala, 2006):

- (i) by bringing them to the campus for programmes and refresher courses specially designed for them; and
- (ii) by getting their help in conducting sessions, developing cases and teaching materials, executing research and consultancy projects, creating physical facilities, and instituting endowments, research chairs, scholarships and the like.

CONCLUSION

In this study an effort has been made to discuss the emerging issues where attention is needed for bringing value and growth in the management education in India. The result is aimed at to meet the demand of globalized village from today's management graduates. The top business-schools differentiate themselves from all others depending upon above discussed issues only. The challenge of management education is to become more practical oriented and industry focus with a holistic, targeted and customized focus to remove the gap that exist between industry requirements and academic curriculum. Institutes need to focus on grooming right attitude, creating corporate awareness, and developing managerial skills among the aperiens. Improved and frequent industry interaction will help in both student and faculty development. Faculty enrichment, Curriculum cum pedagogical development, research initiatives are key drivers for holistic development of the management education. In addition, financial and academic autonomy, building ethical values, strengthening the moral compass, managing innovation and prioritizing the art of governance as the approach to management. It should also promote social accountability and environmental responsibility and inculcate the skills enabling business school graduates to take up business, community and environmental issues at all levels. In other words, business schools must be innovative, flexible and responsive to the dictates of the changing environment.

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