

Trends, Challenges and Quality Imperatives in Management Education in the State of Madhya Pradesh

Anurag Dilraj^a, Robin Thomas^b and Prateek Maheshwari^c

^{a,b,c} Assistant Professor, IBMR, IPS Academy, Indore, 452012

ABSTRACT: Across the globe a degree in business management is highly coveted as it is perceived to open doors to opportunities and high-paid jobs and India is no exception. However, with the increased inclination towards gaining management degrees and a rapid increase in number of B-Schools in the country a big question mark raises not only on the quality of management education and its relevance but also on the acumen of MBA aspirants and students pursuing MBA degrees. The top b-schools in India admit candidates through stringent selection criteria and then impart relevant and contemporary management education. On the other hand admissions in many other institutions are neither stringent nor rigorous and therefore the competency of pass-outs remains a question mark. Management education is facing multiple challenges in maintaining its relevance and keeping pace with changing demands of the industry. Although issues such as the quality of faculty and infrastructure concerns the entire academia but discussions must also take into consideration the quality of MBA aspirants, mushrooming B-schools and loop holes in regulation of professional education. The current paper aims at finding some of the important challenges and issues concerning management education in India in the changing times while discussing examples, lessons and insights from the state of Madhya Pradesh. The scope of the paper covers years from 2008 to 2012. The paper also discusses ‘Sallis’ quality imperative model in educational establishments in Indian context.

Keywords: Management Education; B-Schools; Higher Technical Education; Regulation in Education; B-School Governance; Quality in Education

INTRODUCTION

In recent times there has been a spurt of surveys and reports indicating that the employability of management graduates in the functional roles of management remains as low as 10 to 20% of the totals pass outs churned every year in the country. The very first question is raised on the quality of management education and then a simultaneous question rises on the ability of the admitted students in gaining and inculcating knowledge that is being imparted and skills which are being taught to them. The fact however remains that there is a gap between what is desired by the industry and what is being supplied by the educational institutions. A clear inference therefore, that a mere MBA degree is no guarantee of high and a well-paid job. And thus, the scope of present discussion in finding the answers to this gap.

Various government agencies and certain foreign institutions studying and scrutinizing Indian economy point that for 2012-13 Indian economic growth rate could be as low as 5 per cent, lowest in last 10 years. If Indian GDP is slowing down then trade, commerce and businesses start to bottom out and so is the economy's ability to produce more jobs. And with so many management graduates coming out in job market without a job the unemployment shoots up and thus an eventual question mark again rises on the desirability of management degree itself.

1. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Indian B-schools are not untouched by the contextual compulsions of the Management education in the international arena and need to revitalize in order to meet the expectations of stakeholders as opined by Jha and Kumar (2012). Saba et al. (2011) assessed the effects of MBA degree on enhancement of skills and career advancement and concluded that the degree provide better opportunities and diversified skills, helping working professionals act as worthy managers.

A three-year study on the future of management education and development, reported by Porter and McKibbin (1988) and commissioned by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), surveyed management education as traditionally provided by colleges and universities and also as delivered by other systems such as corporations and third-party providers. The authors conclusion were largely centered around factors such as the need for strategic planning in business education including the supply/demand patterns and societal expectations; business school missions and niches; curriculum faculty preparation and development and accreditations/regulations. The factors hindering the effectiveness of management education in India reported by Reddy (1991) emphasized the lack of clarity regarding the expected outcome of the management education program, discipline-orientation and ivory-tower approach of the academicians, lack of involvement by practitioners in the industry and bias towards conceptual learning.

Mintzberg (2004) writes that because MBA programs cater for young people with little or no managerial experience, students are unable to use art or craft, and so they become spoon-fed with analysis and technique to emphasize the scientific aspects of management. This results in MBA graduates who engage in too much analysis, reducing managing to decision making through analysis and technique. When university service quality is in question Prasad and Verma (2013) conclude that employability and industry-institute interaction is the most important factor for management students. However amidst concerns about the relevance of management education and employability of management graduates, it is opined by Jarzbkowski et al. (2010) that there is relatively little evidence about whether graduates use the management tools and concepts they are taught and found out that four educational characteristics—level of formal education, frequency of management training, specificity of strategic management education, and time elapsed since formal education—drive adoption of strategy tools at work. While examining adjusting management teaching to address the complex needs of business professionals in context of Poland and Polish faculty and to explore potential solutions, Kowalski (2008) concludes that adjusting teaching is a slow and complex process that cannot occur without substantial changes in values as well as proactive leadership and collaboration at the individual, institutional, and national levels.

2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The study aims to assess the trends in management education in India with special reference to the state of Madhya Pradesh. The purpose of the study is to analyze the concept of quality in management education while underlining the problems, possible answers and future course for the stakeholders associated with management education.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study examines the data related to proliferation of management education in India and related to management entrance exams, management institutions and MBA courses intake in the state of Madhya Pradesh and analytically reviews the data. Further the concept of quality in management education is revisited in the changing contexts.

4. Inclusive MBA education: B-Schools Reaping the MBA Fashion

In January 2013, The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) released a paper on "B-schools and Engineering colleges shut down- Big Business Struggles". The paper reports that except IIM graduates, management institutions (roughly around a total of 4,500) are fast losing on campus recruitments while many B-schools face struggle for survival and that 180 schools shut shop in 2012 and another 160 may follow suit in 2013. The Assocham paper further adds that compared to 2008, in 2012 mere 10% of the management graduates not belonging to top 20 B-schools were employable directly after their education, while it was 58% in 2008.

The much sought after MBA degree in India undoubtedly became a vogue thing since the last years of 1990s, resulting in mushrooming of B-schools and exceptional increase in management seats. Academicians and industry experts call it the phenomena of bringing the coveted MBA degree to the masses. Questionably this proliferation surmises upon derived industry demand. And therefore industry ready pass-outs are the basic criteria for justification for such proliferation, which eventually must converge based on comprehensive quality delivery, covering key aspects of preparedness for the industry and academic concepts. If industry acceptance of pass-outs is as low as 10% as claimed by certain reports, it indicates that such a convergence is exceedingly inert to the extent that even the academic portion of this mechanism, its delivery and results are frittered. And therefore this proliferation is not justified.

Table No. 01 compares number of seats in the country in management, engineering and MCA courses for five consecutive years, 2005-06 to 2010-11. The data suggests that average annual growth rate (AAGR) for last five years in management courses seats have been 41.8%, which is higher than engineering courses seats (33% AAGR) and MCA course seats (23.6%). Clearly the data indicates that management seats comparatively have increased at a much larger pace in the county and that management education is much sought after, it also indicates to the problem of mushrooming of B-schools in the country.

Table 01. Comparison of Technical Courses Intake Over a Period of Six Years

Year	Management Seats		Engineering Seats		MCA Seats	
	Seats	% increase in seats	Seats	% increase in seats	Seats	% increase in seats
2005-06	122,663		499,697		61,991	
2006-07	144,372	17.7%	550,986	10.3%	63,394	2.3%
2007-08	185,780	28.7%	653,290	18.6%	78,692	24.1%
2008-09	227,989	22.7%	841,018	28.7%	82,578	4.9%
2009-10	273,732	20.1%	1,071,896	27.5%	121,123	46.7%
2010-11	378,907	38.4%	1,324,246	23.5%	135,173	11.6%

Source: AICTE

Table 02 represents the number of institutions running MBA courses and the intake/seats to MBA courses under the regulations of the Directorate of Technical Education, Madhya Pradesh. These institutions admit students based on the results of state management entrance exam called the MP MET (Madhya Pradesh Management Entrance Test) conducted by the Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (VYAPAM) in Madhya Pradesh. For the academic session 2013-13 onwards AICTE's CMAT (Common Management Admission Test) shall be the basis of admissions in MBA courses in Madhya Pradesh. Chart 01 depicts the rapid increase both in the number of institutions running MBA courses and the intake in such courses.

Management Institutions and Total Intake in MBA Courses

Chart 01

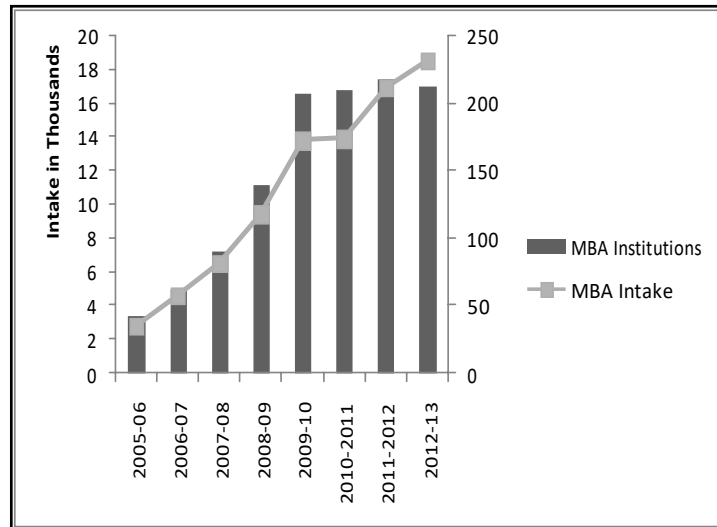


Table 02

MBA Courses run under the regulations of Directorate of Technical Education-M.P. Govt.		
Year/Session	Institutions	Intake/Seats
2005-06	42	2790
2006-07	63	4600
2007-08	91	6530
2008-09	139	9410
2009-10	208	13800
2010-2011	210	13890
2011-2012	218	16920
2012-13	213	18510

Source: DTE MP, VYAPAM

Table 03 represents the total candidates appeared for MP MET in the years from 2008 to 2012 and classification of candidates based on their category. Chart 02 plots candidates appeared for MP MET and the total intake in MBA courses all over Madhya Pradesh. A startling observation is the fact that in five years MBA seats have doubled while candidates appearing in MP MET remained only a third of the candidates appearing in 2008.

Candidates Appeared In MP MET And Total Intake

Chart 02

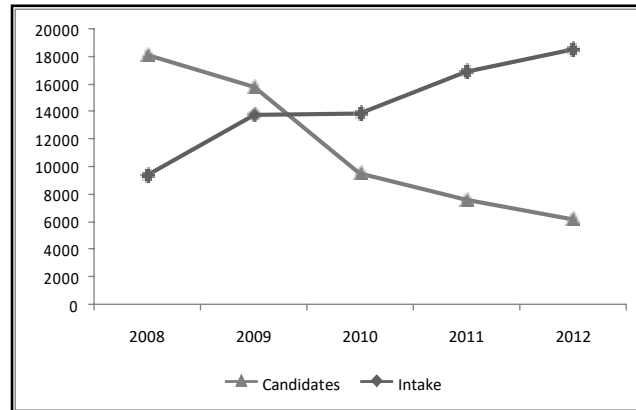


Table 03

Candidates Appeared in MP-MET					
Year	Un Reserved	SC	ST	OBC	TOTAL
2008	11627	1137	178	5211	18153
2009	10222	928	143	4527	15820
2010	6168	530	87	2787	9572
2011	4999	353	84	2166	7602
2012	3960	385	78	1801	6224

Source: DTE MP, VYAPAM

The question which highlights the discussion of the paper is, that why there has been a continuous rise in the number of MBA seats in the state while the candidates appearing in the state management entrance test has reduced drastically? The answer is closely linked with the quality of student intake in management institutions not only in M.P. but all over the country. Most of the colleges whose seats remain vacant after the counseling phases related with the MP MET are filled by college level counseling where seats are allotted based on candidates marks obtained in graduation. And thus a significant intake into the MBA courses constitutes of students who did not face the competitive entrance exam, the MP MET.

5. Benchmarking Management Education

Management institutions in India can be broadly classified into four categories (categorization irrespective of merit), in the first category falls all institutes in India of high repute who have student centric delivery mechanism in place and produce high quality graduates, who are well taken by the industry. University departments, private colleges affiliated with universities and management institutions deemed to be university belong to second category. Private, autonomous

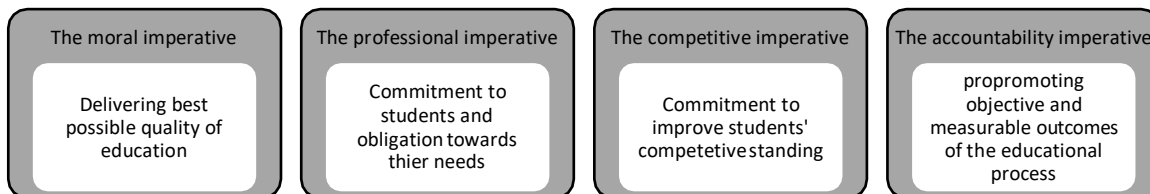
institutions approved by ACITE fall into the third category. And private institutions affiliated to foreign universities fall in the fourth category. However there are certain other institutions also which are neither affiliated to any university nor accredited by AICTE.

In the early days of management education in India the pioneering institutions benchmarked themselves through prominent international institutes imparting management knowledge. The practice is unobservable in the current times and has given way for a regulatory approval from the apt body for example the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) one of the regulators of management education in India which evaluates and authorizes institutes to run management courses. Although the regulators have well placed norms like student teacher ratio, qualification norms for teachers, infrastructure and pedagogy; there are numerous instances reported of by-passing such norms on the part of the institutions. The regulators maintain their caveat emptor in regard to students choosing an institute, advising them to make an informed choice. AICTE has the power to take punitive action on institutions not approved by this apex regulatory organization. MBA institutes affiliated with Universities may choose accreditation by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) which functions as an autonomous body under University Grants Commission and accredits institutions of higher education. National Board of Accreditation (NBA), started under the aegis AICTE is an autonomous body with effect from 7th January 2010, with the objective of Assurance of Quality and Relevance of Education, especially in technical disciplines, including Management through program/course accreditation. NBA accredits programs approved by AICTE and which have already graduated out two batches of students.

6. Quality In Management Education: A Model Built On Four Quality Imperatives

Edward Sallis (2002, Total Quality Management in Education) proposes four quality imperatives in an educational establishment, namely the moral imperative, the professional imperative, the competitive imperative and the accountability imperative. Chart No. 03 depicts the details of the imperatives.

Chart 03



We have attempted to provide with a framework to illustrate a quality model for management education in Indian context based on the four imperatives give by Sallis.

The moral imperative: The essentials of moral imperative are (1) strict compliance with regulatory framework and mechanism and (2) transparent and value driven ethical governance.

The professional imperative: The requisites of an educational institution's professional footing and appeal to students stand on quality of faculty and infrastructure, innovative and creative delivery of curriculum to the students and creating a student centric approach to the entire delivery mechanism.

The competitive imperative: An institution's competitive footing is built upon the commitment to which the students are able to enhance their competitive footprints. Commitment to improve students' competitive standing is an essential condition for this imperative and is based upon organizational collaborations, skill development and enhancement, motivation and job facilitations.

The accountability imperative: Quality improvement and benchmarks accompany measurable objectives which in turn support a quality feedback process and eventually results in quality betterment. The accountability imperative is not only the basis of quality mechanism for institutions both bidding and bearing autonomy but for all institutions where quality may be judged based on the four imperatives. The accountability imperative bestows a purposeful duty in the hands of an institution to deliver results based on the four imperatives.

7. SUGGESTIONS

The quality imperatives provide the framework for comprehensive improvement in all related spheres of management education and it involves all the stakeholders, not just the management institution alone. The following are the suggestions based on observation of challenges in management education and its classification under the quality imperative. This classification provides stakeholders to critically judge the institution and take apt and appropriate actions. The model may be developed further to construct a scale to rank and monitor management educational institutions.

1. Issues related to accreditation, organizational management, and corruption in practices, issues of transparency, ethical mindset and commitment towards best possible comprehensive managerial education delivery to students; should be dealt under the moral imperative.
2. Quality of faculty, faculty development, infrastructure, lateral support, pedagogy, curriculum and focus on research should form the basis of professional commitment to students.
3. Quality of students, corporate collaborations, placements, skills development, and managerial acumen, working with efficiency and effectiveness, knowledge, application of management concepts, theories and tools should fall under the competitive imperative.
4. Accountability is a broad notion, an umbrella covering the other three imperatives and fixing the responsibility and commitment towards education, students, employees, industry, regulators and potential students and talent.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper reveals that the main issues in management education is that students are eager to pursue a management degree but poor placements, infrastructure, corporate collaborations do not commensurate with fees being charged. Outdated course curriculum, lack of qualified faculties and rapid mushrooming of management institutions has further deteriorated the scenario.

Regular up gradation & training of faculty members and proper focus on research will help to uplift the level of education in central India region. Focus should be shifted from conceptual learning to skill development. Institutes should also put efforts to acquire faculty members having a greater practical orientation and an interdisciplinary approach.

Management education needs to be holistic, targeted and customized with aim to remove the gap that exist between industry requirements and academic curriculum focusing on attitude, corporate

awareness, grooming and developing managerial skills. Industry interaction has to be strengthened by inviting senior person from industry to deliver lecture and ensuring student get associated with live industry projects. Learning needs to be student centric resulting in development in all areas such as analytical reasoning, lateral thinking, and solving case studies and as such. Mentoring and career counseling has to be introduced. Most B-schools claim to have it but only as a lip service. If Management education in India has to really extend its image on international scenario; Institutes, Industry and government will have to work in alignment to improve quality of management education.

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