

## QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** In past few years, India has emerged as one of the fastest growing educational hubs of the globe. Earlier, known as cultural nation, now India is called a land of culture and education. In the process of providing educational services, various professional courses, abbreviating gender disparities and promoting education, the educational face of the nation has been changing frequently. In this transformation the growth of management education has excelled all other fields, at present in India there is a good number of mushrooming management institutes is also there to provide degrees or diplomas, and not very surprisingly the result of this entire network of such educational institutes is creation of a pool of MBAs who are qualified degree holders but their contribution in society and economy is not very outstanding.

The concerns about the relevance of management course content in Indian context, need for restructuring the completely Indian management education system to inculcate larger relevance with developing Indian economy and to provide all resources to create a vibrant and rigorous academic community of management scientist have dominated the scenario in past few years.

**Keywords:** MBA Education, MBA Curriculum, Curriculum Reform, Evaluation System, Faculty

### Introduction

In past few years, India has emerged as one of the fastest growing educational hubs of the globe. India is called a land of culture and education. In the process of providing educational services, various professional courses, abbreviating gender disparities and promoting education; the educational face of the nation has been changing frequently. In this transformation the growth of management education has excelled all other fields, at present in India there is a good number of mushrooming management institutes to give degrees or diplomas, and not very surprisingly the result of this entire network of such educational institutes is creation of a pool of MBAs who are qualified degree holders but their contribution in research is not very outstanding. (Rajen K Gupta, 1992).

“Management education was launched in India soon after independence to meet the need for managerial manpower in relation to the country's strategy of planned development with plenty of emphasis on modernization and self-reliance. Initial plans and action on this subject were sponsored by government in view of the special importance attached to state enterprise within the framework of democratic socialism.” (N R Sheth 1991)

For last 50 years, much has been talked about Management Education. The history of controversies about Management education also goes along with emergence of management education in India. The three major inputs are management education and training, organizational research, and management consultancy, which are considered essential for development of management education. (Bennis et al, 1964). Over the years an array of questions about relevance of management education has been raised like-”Is there a need of integrating management consultancy and organization research with the element of training. Is there a requirement for molding the content of education to facilitate participative management and joint decision-making? Are the content and form of management education relevant to the needs of Indian enterprise and society? Has management education generated elitism among its product with an attendant inability to perform urgent roles and tendency to expect quick rewards? Are management schools treated as parasites on the country's academic system?” (Sheth, N. R. 1991). These are the questions incorporating the major concerns of various stakeholders of management education system

The All- India Council for Technical Education set up a Board of Management Studies (BMS) in 1954 to lay down standards of education, co-ordinate educational facilities and guide government promotion of relevant institutions. It has certain guidelines for the management institutes to get approved and accredited But the suggestions and remedies which come out of all these discussions and deliberation take place only in guidelines issued to establishing institute or in the mandatory disclosures handed over to the governing bodies; but the quality of management education is still suffering with the same tribulations even after 40 years.. If we really want to improve the quality of MBA education then we have to take some concrete steps. The initiatives which can convert this MBA course into a process nurturing the young talents into the MBA who is a manager in a real sense, who is ready to face the challenges of a global, dynamic and volatile corporate environment, who can show his managerial ability in times of crisis, who has the courage and zeal of an entrepreneur, a manager who has the capability to innovate new original concepts and managerial practices. We can change the destiny of thousands of MBAs who are coming out of these private institutions. The MBAs who are ironically prepared to cater to all big multinationals but land up catering all local industries ending up their career as frustrated and unfit managers.

The process of producing MBA in India can be understood as any other process of production. In this process, also, an Input is the MBA aspirants. A throughput includes the course curriculum and the inputs we provide

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to students during the duration of course. In addition, an output is MBAs. Some of the remedial steps are proposed by the author in all the components of process of producing MBAs.

If we can successfully implement the changes in the first two components then the output will automatically be changed. The foremost and essential thing is that these all-remedial steps must be original and suiting to the Indian business requirements so that the output which comes out; can establish the Indian management practices in the global scenario.

## The Input

### Attracting the applicants-Branding of the Institution

The first component is the candidates who are selected for the course of MBA.

Most of us want to change the pattern of the admission test and the selection procedure but in my opinion as in any organization, recruitment comes before the process of selection of candidates.

Recruitment is the process of searching the candidates for employment and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organization". This is a process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. The process begins when new recruits are sought and ends when their applications are submitted. The result is a pool of applications from which new employees are selected. It can be applicable for our MBA course also. Therefore, our remedies should also start with the first step that is recruitment, attracting the talents.

The talents will be attracted only when the branding of the institution is good and if we scrutinize the facts; than we can easily observe among the thousands of students who are admitted in some coaching, devoting their time money and efforts to do MBA, only a few see profit in being admitted in any Rajasthan based management school. Even the government universities who were enjoying the top positions too have noticed a downturn in their reputation in last decade.

If we want to make good candidates apply then certainly instead of highlighting some false figures of a techno savvy campus and placements, actually we need to create an excellent brand to at least some good stuff applying first.

If the pool is sufficiently good then only we can move forward from which we have to screen the suitable candidates as our input by adopting better selection criteria.

### Adopting appropriate selection Criteria

Adoption of good selection criteria is also necessary; to produce diamond first you need to choose the raw diamond. If you take a stone then you may put your life polishing and cutting into shape, but you can never add the shine and value of a diamond into it.

Therefore, if you want to end up with excellent managers at least you need to select people who deserve and are ready to put efforts in that direction.

In our B schools most of the candidates who are selected have never entered into the field, they have never faced the crisis, they don't know anything about the day to day work pressures, the people who have never followed the orders of superiors or never guided subordinates, who never worked to meet deadlines but they are good at number crunching and mugging up some facts and even some may be fluent in English, but to express yourself the communication skills and confidence is necessary. To refine our selection procedure, some strategies that we can opt for, are:

- The corporate experience must be mandatory for the candidate.
- The personal interview must be there. The interview panel must consist of industry representatives as well as academicians and this interview can consist of role-play and case studies where the candidates can show management ability to tackle a situation or a crisis.
- The communication skills are necessary as even the most intelligent people fail to become effective manager without soft skills, so the tests must be the basis to judge the students with soft skills; Communication and confidence.

## The Process

Now let us move further towards next step that is change in present process. In the process, the focus areas will be faculty selection, curriculum development, and examination and evaluation system.

### Faculty Selections:

Right now, the getting selected as a faculty in any institute is even easier that driving a car, once you have a license called Ph. D. or MBA; you are considered fit to teach young managers.

Right now, the institutes are full of faculty members who are educated desk researchers who can play a lot with secondary data showing their manipulative skills but actually, these people actually have never entered into a field. They can claim to bring field to classroom in the form of case studies, but will never take students to field.

Even virtually all industrial visits and educational tours are done on papers then industries, it can be understood like a situation where coach teaches the aspirants to swim, standing outside the swimming pool for two years but nobody out of them actually knows that what does it feel when you enter into the pool. Moreover, after the completion of course when the students actually enter into the pool, despite the fact that they know all the concepts of swimming, they are doomed to drown.

So faculty selection must be based on the genuine field experience, be it in the industry or empirical research experience. Corporate experience, as applied for the students, must be mandatory for faculty selection as well.

The entire faculty mix of an institute should consist of corporate people and researchers. Even there must be a rotation in the designations of the faculty, they must frequently dig up corporate assignment and indulge in field research (not desk research). Instead of doing more researches that are theoretical, they should essentially devote their time to refresh themselves frequently by working in corporate in their respective areas. The refresher courses for management faculties should also be full of corporate assignments instead of brushing up just theoretical concepts.

However, some institutes try to compensate by inviting speakers from corporate but the one side of the problem of this strategy is the skills and abilities of educators and trainers to convey the conceptual and empirical aspects of the education in an uncomplicated and palatable manner. Some expert trainers and educators have a propensity to mystify concepts with high-sounding jargon and complex communication. It is essential for all educators to demystify such education and facilitate comprehension by intelligent nonprofessionals. Therefore, the faculties, who can deliver the concepts in a simple and comprehensive manner and have a corporate exposure, are always a better option.

#### Curriculum Development

Next part is curriculum development, the syllabus we teach to train these students.

In most of the institutes and universities the curriculum is developed on papers without asking the customer of our products, the industry representatives; what do they want in their prospective employee at the end of two years we throw our candidates who are well trained but for what; that even they themselves do not know.

Management education and training, organizational research, and management consultancy are considered to be the three major inputs for management development. In India, there has been much stress on management education and training alone. Nevertheless, the rest two parts also need equal attention.

In my point of the following suggestion may work for a better curriculum development:

The whole curriculum must be developed with the representation of all parts of society, that is, students, parents, industry representatives, alumni, and faculty members.

All the representatives must tell their expectations from the course and based on those expectations a complete detailed list of knowledge skills and abilities must be prepared based on the description of activities required to be performed.

The curriculum development must be mission based, the missions which are being prepared by the industry and institute. Every part of curriculum must contribute something towards attainment of the mission.

The curriculum must be prepared to support entrepreneurial spirit. The day one candidate enters into the course we would him to be good manager but for

somebody else. The entrepreneurial spirit is dead in this course.

If we want indigenous excellent management practices, then we must keep that spirit alive and should shape their talents in a way that they can become good entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs. However, most importantly, all these things should not be restricted to papers but have to come into practice.

#### Evaluation System

The next important component in the process is examination system.

The examination system (and this is not only limited to management education but this is the problem with almost whole education system pertaining to all the courses) that we call management a mix of science and arts but our examination system treats this course as only art by including theory examinations. Even the practical subjects like summer projects and dissertations have been limited to hardbound reports.

The evaluation must be based on what students implement and not only they mug up and vomit out in examination answer books.

For the evaluation, there must be the industry experts in the panel who should take students for a short period into their industries wherein they should give them practical problems to solve. Based on the managerial and decision making skills they show while chalking out the solution, the performance should be assessed.

#### The Output

Finally yet importantly is the output.

The output as done in any manufacturing system should be according to what our customers demand. The candidates must be prepared to meet the specific demands of given industries with a promise that if they qualify their criteria then they will immediately be absorbed in the industry.

There should be the input of total quality management in the education that all the candidates will be evaluated by the prospective employers and if these candidates fail to satisfy the criteria, they must clear the process again, even a minute deviation from the quality should not be allowed.

In my opinion these steps, if applied in practice, can help us to create the managers and entrepreneurs; the managers who can innovate and the entrepreneurs who can invent and pave the path towards managerial excellence. The managers who can justify their roles in the business and society which they are expected to perform and can put efforts to introduce a new outlook and work ethic in Indian work organizations.

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