MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this publication is two-fold. It is to assist local authorities in the evaluation of their own systems of quality assurance and educational development, or ‘quality development’ as it is increasingly known, and to set out the quality indicators which will provide the basis for external inspection and Best Value scrutiny of the education functions of local authorities.

Through self-evaluation, authorities will be supported in:

• providing continuously-improving services in their area

• meeting the responsibilities set out in the Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc. Act

• meeting the requirements of the Best Value initiative.

The fact that the quality indicators will be used for inspection and other forms of external scrutiny removes any mystique from the inspection process. Although purposes and audiences may be different, the language and basis for self and external evaluation should be the same so that there can be an open and honest dialogue and consistency across different areas and different evaluators.

KEYWORDS: Management Education, Quality, Improvement, Emerging Trends.

INTRODUCTION

Management Education is all about learning different skills and to apply them for mutual and multi faceted growth and value creation. Its aim is to create the desired competence for the optimum and most productive utilization of man and materials. In this volatile and fast changing scenario when every other day new technology is emerging and rendering the older one obsolete and outdated, it is imperative that management education should be dynamic and responsive.
towards the new challenges that are knocking at its doorstep. As an emerging and promising
economy, India is the arena of all business and industrial activities and a much sought after
destination for every global player. In this backdrop, it is essential to develop necessary
educational infrastructure, equipment and tools in the field of management education to equip the
students with desired skills and capabilities to enable them to deliver and make a dent.

Creating an indigenous model education in India for today is the most challenging task faced by
the business schools. With the growing demand for management education in the country, the
upsurge is also felt in the challenges and opportunities.

Though, there are many management schools in India which claim to be the best, but the
academic standard in many business schools are not up to the mark. It is very important to
choose the right B-school as a MBA education is expensive and you want the best ROI in it. It is
very important to realize that management institutes vary widely in terms of the quality of
faculty, curriculum, infrastructure, and placement record. Barring few top level ones, most
institutes are churning out half-baked, partially skilled managers and thus defeating the very
purpose of Management Education. The challenges faced by management education are many.

INSTITUTE: LACK OF VISION, MISSION AND GOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

The institutes are the major players but they lack in infrastructure, vision and mission. Any
institute big or small, old or new is successful if it is capable of conceiving and constructing
clear-cut vision and preparing well chalked out strategies to achieve them. Without vision it is
impossible to survive and sustain. There is also an absence of a well defined mission without
which no institute can achieve what it requires and desires. Their prime motive is money making
and not creating competence among students. Though there are a large number of colleges
having a good amount of seats, most of them are lying vacant. In order to fill the seats, the
institutes compromise on quality. The infrastructure (building, layout, library, classrooms,
conference rooms etc) are not sufficient and up to the mark. There are not properly screened
before they are being commissioned and after that regular periodic inspection and accreditation
do not follow. Sadly, any institute failing in one aspect or parameter is allowed to run freely.

LACK OF FULLY COMPETENT FACULTY

The faculties in the B-schools are grossly inadequate and ill equipped often resulting in
delivering sub standard and poor results. There is no specific training program which may equip
them for their job and they are unable to teach even what they know. To improve the academic
standards of MBA education it is important to have well-trained and high-quality teachers which
enable the student to translate potential into performance. Most of the Indian B-schools fail to
attract good faculty and those who teach do not have any industry experience thus are unable to
teach practical aspects and nuances of management. It is highly disheartening that most of them
do not make any efforts to overcome this drawback through keeping themselves updated on
whatever is happening in business world. This is a big loophole in the system of management
education. To plug these loopholes, there must be a regular and compulsory interaction between
business executives and faculties for mutual benefit. The more interaction a teacher is having, the
more should be his salary package. A fixed faculty student ratio is the best way to ensure
individual focus and attention to every student. Also most of the teachers are not permanent, these teachers are visiting faculty who are paid by the hour and who teach at more than one B-school. Adding to the woes further there is a high turnover ratio of faculty. This can be effectively handled by offering best salary packages to the faculties as comparable to the managers and business leaders. The faculty and staff members should feel belongingness towards the institutes and should identify their own goals with to that of the institute.

**CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

A good curriculum should integrate the diverse academic disciplines for creating managers capable of making ethical and commercially viable decisions in an interconnected world. A quick glance at the MBA curricula of Indian B-schools reveals that the curriculum across the country is not uniform and standardized. The programs in all institutes are overloaded with a large number of compulsory courses, and there are little choices available on elective courses. Also these courses lack of focus, creativity and innovation. The large number of assignments and evaluation that go with every course is making our students only half baked, partially skilled experts in cutting and pasting.

The pedagogy also is substandard and insufficient. It lays more emphasis on class room lectures and traditional methods of teaching and learning and less on case studies, live projects, corporate interface, simulations and training programs. It keeps on delivering low quality products which lack grossly in soft skills and decision making skills.

The current curriculum in management education is creating job seekers and not job creators. It does not teach students in facing the challenges in business environment. How to manage uncertainty and complexity are not taught in business schools. It merely teaches the concepts with case studies. It does not focus on the challenges arising out of rapid growing technology and the challenges involved in running an enterprise. The students are not job ready as there is a big gap between what is taught in the class room and that is required in the industry. As a manager has to deal with a variety of issues, he/she must have the knowledge and awareness about them. The need of the hour is to need to modify the curricula of B-schools by incorporating courses on global leadership, diversity management, managing across cultures, business history, managerial sociology and psychology etc. It should focus more in inculcation of research and development temperament to stay ahead in this cut throat competition. It should also inculcate the spirit of self learning, self preparation and self motivation among the students.

**STUDENTS**

The level of students who are coming to management education is semi equipped and less technofriendly. They lack vital skills (soft skills, analytical and decision making skills) and a creative bent of mind. The B-school should train students to develop their interpersonal skills as increasing size and complexity of organizations require soft skills and counseling to manage diverse teams working in different places. Also knowledge of quantitative data analysis and modeling needs to be strengthened. They should be taught many subjects apart from management like Law, Psychology, Sociology and Environment studies as they have to face various issues relating these subjects. They must be trained thoroughly so as to develop their
vision enabling them to foresee change and plan in advance for reaping the optimum benefits. They must not merely be aware of newer technologies but also be able to handle them efficiently. Even after passing out, unfortunately, the best talent is going to industry where salaries are lucrative. Those who come to academic area are the ones who could not be absorbed in the industry or those who come to this profession by chance or those who chose this career out of passion. However, we can count very few professors joining out of passion towards teaching profession.

REGULATORY BODIES

There must be regular inspection of the B schools by the regulatory bodies so that they cannot lose focus towards their goals and performance. The regulator or governing bodies should ensure that all necessary and compulsory requirements and procedures must be fully and thoroughly followed. The very purpose of setting the educational institutes must not be defeated. In India, inability of AICTE to act tough with unauthorized business schools is a cause for concern. The management of business schools looks for loopholes in the existing laws and exploits the same. They believe in growing their budget rather improving the quality of business education which is very sad to note. These bodies will have to be more active and efficient only then they will be able to curb the menace.

FORECASTING

There is failure in management education which is evident with the current economic downturn. The educational system failed to forecast the recession and failed to check the overheated economy. The four pillars for effective management education are industry experience, consultancy experience, research experience and teaching experience. When faculties possess these four areas of experience and expertise, then it ensures qualitative management education. The problem with us is to imitate the western management education blindly. By the time we take best out of them, the content and curriculum gets outdated thus resulting into obsolescence. Our system is little creative and innovative in preparation of curriculum and methodology of teaching.

Educational qualification is the brick and mortar of a specific career path. Let us make Indian management education qualitative and affordable to all.

NEED FOR REFORMULATING THE OBJECTIVES OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

State level universities as well as management Institutes operating at the National Level impart management education but their orientation, vision, mission as well as their objectives differ hugely. The objectives of the university being, to grant affiliation to many autonomous institutes in the state so that maximum students get an opportunity of getting admission, but this process leads to mass production of unemployable management graduates and mushrooming of ill equipped management Institutes.
To truly succeed in the arena of management education the focus of management Institutes in India should be to Create BUSINESS LEADERS who have the global perspective and vision. Gone are the days when the job of a manager was to manage the factors of production in his organization only, for in an era where geo-political boundaries are being replaced by geo-economic boundaries the manager too needs to have the proficiencies required to meet the challenges posed by the global market. Keeping these needs in mind the system of management education in India needs to reformulate and reorient itself under the umbrella of global perspective. Where the objective in the past has been to create quantitatively and qualitatively efficient managers to support the Indian industry, the focus now needs to shift to developing human resources who meet the global standards of performance.

The management institute’s proficiency will now depend upon understanding the business environment and in creating customer value. The customers here being both internal (Faculty & Staff) and external (industry) and the collective acceptance of these two segment will determine the management institutes’ ultimate success. The duty to satisfy the external customer is the responsibility of the internal customer and the responsibility to retain and maintain the internal customers should be the duty of the education system, including the state, the promoters.

The present system of management education in India barring what is practice in a few top institutes has become warped, disoriented and dysfunctional, producing a number of unemployed young managers who are unable to find a suitable place for themselves in the industry. The fault here is not with the students but inherent in the system, which is creating job seeker and not job creators. The courses in management should aim at developing entrepreneurial skills so that students are trained to take on the reins of the industry and become major contributor to countries industrial development.

The focus should be laid on eliminating the chasm between theory and practice, the management education apart from teaching the fundamental and the core functional areas need to talk about:-

- Leadership
- Self-organisation
- Ethical Commitment
- Creative thinking
- Operational flexibilities

So that they can, in true sense of the word, become epitome of wholesome learning.

The option to shift to global universities and institutes while at home poses a two-fold challenge to our education system. The first being the ability to attract and maintain a stable student’s base in our universities and institutes and the second being the challenge to retain the capable/talented teaching faculty.
To meet both these challenges posed by the global competitors and to achieve sustained development of this sector a lot of issues need to be ignored out and restructured. In order to transform the system of management education in India, it will be useful to first analyze the characteristic of reputed business schools operating in India and then by doing a comparison on those lines with the state level university, the result of such analysis will help in identifying chasm between functioning of the national level institutes and the state level universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The recommendations are based on the areas of improvement brought to light by the above mentioned comparative analysis are as follows:-

1. STRINGENT ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

The management institutes have a Hobson’s choice as far as students’ intake is concerned. If a check on the quality of student’s intake is maintained through a difficult test or inclusion of other requirements of admission, the viability of many of institutes is doubtful as many of the institutes will have to close down due to shortage of students in such Institutes. At the same time if the quality of students is not checked the institutes lose their credibility in the job market and will be branded for producing mediocre stuff. The only solution here can be that there should be strict control on the entry of new players in this arena and the ill equipped, ill-planned and ill-provided institutes should not be allowed to operate. The accreditation board should also follow discretion in giving accreditation to such institutes so that the competition remains among the best and not the reserve.

2. CURRICULUM

The present system being followed at regional institutes emphasizes only on giving theoretical knowledge of the functional areas of management and the only chance of interaction that the students have with the industry is the summer training, which gives only an overview and not an insight into the varied aspects of management. Thus it is recommended that interim periods of industrial training be incorporated after every semester wherein the students should be asked to work on live projects and the evaluation of which should form a major part of their results.

The usefulness of any academic curriculum depends upon its relevance upon its relevance in present day times, for it needs to be responsive to the changing realities and should possess the ability to create awareness and knowledge. This being true more so in case of management education, whose prime objective is to upgrade the skills, build the attitude and imparts latest knowledge of global/local business environment. In short, it needs to be market friendly.

The curriculum should be aimed at:

- Refining, decision-making skills
- Polishing the interpersonal skills
Enhancing the student knowledge.

Inculcating Leadership Qualities

To make this possible the curriculum needs to have an in-built, pre designed leadership programmes and strategic collaboration with the industry and corporate houses so as to give a hands-on approach to the students and make them truly employable for the industry.

3) PEDAGOGY

The pedagogical reforms at present are not in place with the rate of advancement of knowledge. Gone are the days of chalk and talk. To do full justice to the management convergence of experimetical methods of imparting knowledge needs to be done.

The classroom need to be the simulated model of the industrial setting and should instill the desired skills among the learners

REALITY: The case study methods, and the incident method bring a chunk of reality to the classrooms so that they can be discussed over by the class and the instructor who can then evoke intelligent discussion so that meaningful learning experiences occur.

FEEL OF THE JOB: In the In-basket method letters, notes, documents and reports are designed so that when the trainee deals with the in-basket material he gets a feel of his job. Similarly, management games and role-playing exercises utilize the model of business situation and give the student an idea of the job.

DEVELOPMENT OF INNER VALUE: Inter personal training in the form of sensitivity training, practical use of transactional analysis and Johari Window develop the student’s social sensitivity and behavioral flexibility. Dogmatism gives way to Dynamism.

DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS: The teachers in the past were seen as the only source for disseminating knowledge, but with the advent of Internet, the students who are relatively more computer savvy than the teachers have the vast reservoir of information at their disposal. The role of teachers should now be to focus on developing Leadership skills, Decision-making skills, Analytical skills, Motivation skills etc that the students cannot learn from the books and computer alone. They are now more of facilitators than knowledge disseminators.

BUILDING ATTITUDES: Management is about conviction and less about calculation and convictions find their roots in the individual’s attitude. Thus building the right attitude so that the students can take on the challenges, show willingness to learn and ability to adapt is as important as imparting subject related knowledge.

ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE: Conferences and other autonomy training techniques add to the knowledge of the students and developed the individual’s ability to manage his own learning needs. Thus sending students to conferences and seminars should be another area of focus.
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: With the tremendous speed at which new knowledge is replacing the old, it is impossible for standardized courses to cater to match individual needs. Management education should provide room for individual need based learning.

The inclusion of the above mentioned learning techniques and creation of the right environment is required to change fresh graduates into corporate leaders of tomorrow.

4. INDUSTRY INSTITUTE INTERFACE

The management institutes need to function in tandem with the industry. The institute and the industry need to co-evolve and shift from competitive advantage to complementary advantage. Apart from interacting with the industry only through guest lectures and industrial visits, the professionally trained management students can act as additional aid to the business enterprises. They can be used to conduct surveys, compile reports, and collect market information etc on behalf of the industry on live projects. This will give industrial exposure to the business enterprise. Especially, when organizations are going in for outsourcing of employees and shifting to a lean and mean organizational structure this workforce can come in very handy.

5) FACULTY ORIENTATION

The journey of the reoriented management system from the drawing board to actual implementation will only be possible if the academicians have the conviction for making it a success.

Emphasis should be laid on the following areas:

- **ELIGIBILITY NORMS:** To translate theory into practice it is essential that the management teachers have first hand experience and knowledge of the industrial setting and functioning. To accomplish this, minimum eligibility for such teachers should include industrial/research experience of 4-5 years before joining the teaching profession.

- **BASE TRAINING:** No formal base training is given to lecturers on how to disseminate knowledge and create a positive teacher student relationship. Like in case of school teaching specialized training in the form of B.ed and M.ed courses are available but for lecturer ship though a qualifying exam being conducted by UGC is there, but it is in no way a reflection on the candidate teaching capabilities. Formal training system thus needs to be developed.

- **INDUSTRIAL EXPOSURE:** If the institutes find it difficult in getting candidates after implementing the norms then, at least, management faculty should be exposed to the practical aspects of management practices by sending them compulsorily for industrial training at least for a period of 1-2 years. This will help them to relate theoretical aspects to real life business solutions.
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: The management institutes need to encourage their faculty to develop new management cases indulge in research work, do consultations work for the industry and conduct executive development programs. All these activities will not only help the individual teacher but will also help in creating corporate image of the management institute.

To keep pace with the accelerated rate of change in every field the faculty too need to be trained on the latest advancement in the field of education, technology and business environment.

In the fight for attracting and retaining a capable workforce only those management institutes will survive which can provide a learning environment and opportunities of career advancement to their faculties. For the workforce of today has heightened individualism and are aware of their potential, thus retaining such a workforce will be an arduous task for the management institutes.

6) EMBARKING ON A SYSTEM OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT EDUCATION (TQME)

Quality is a complex issue and can have various interpretations. It can be referred to in terms of products, process and systems. In the present world when sustained development has become a watch word the system approach to quality has gained utmost importance and relevance. Globalization and increased domestic competition have brought a sense of urgency in introducing highly successful TQM techniques to Indian organizations and including education organizations.

Mohan and Goswami (1998), have rightfully stated that “quality is not an accident it is always the result of high intention, sincere efforts, intelligent direction and skillful execution. It can be classified as an attitude or a characteristic”.

The concept of total quality management can be adopted to evolve a new total quality management education system (TQMES), which needs to encompass the following components.

QUALITY PLANNING

Identifying needs-this would include students’ development, faculty development and development of processes.

BENCHMARKING: Various practices pertaining to management education need to be benchmarked.

SETTING STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE: Setting standard for every activity in the field of management education against which performance can be measured.

Quality awareness must begin at the inception of any system and should then transgress every stage so that the concept of TQM is imbibed in the whole system. Right from identifying the key players in the system to identifying the needs of the players and setting their performance standards should be done in this stage.
QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION

- Implementation of standards.
- Identifying the chasm between standard and actual performance level.
- Reformulating the plans to eliminate the causes of deviation.
- Implementation of the reformulated plans.

This is the doing phase of the TQM system, no system can succeed until it is implemented in the right spirit and the right perspective. To make this system deliver it is required of all the players to change the attitude, skills and knowledge.

QUALITY MONITORING AND CONTROL

- Monitoring and evaluating quality system.
- Redesigning and restructuring plans for increasing systems efficiency.

The concept of TQM to complete a full circle requires proper monitoring and control. In this phase, the processes that do not respond to the changing needs should be over hauled and deviation, if any, should be ironed out so as to have an effective quality system.

OTHER REMEDIES

IMPROVING LIBRARY AND READING ROOM FACILITIES

A student learns well when she/he is able to learn independently. Classroom teaching is not adequate to pursue learning. Every student needs to go thorough varieties of reading materials available on concerned topics. No student is rich enough to buy all materials. Again, a number of study materials may not be available in local book shops. Besides, there are a large number of students who are poor. Reading room facility from morning till evening is a must for improving quality of higher education. There should be open access system in libraries so that the students come across varieties of books and their level of interest in reading books increases. Libraries including reading rooms should remain open at least for 12 hours every day including Sundays and holidays. If adequate human resources are not available to manage library and reading room in a college, the appropriate authorities may take steps for integrating local public library(s), if any, with the college library to get additional man power to handle reading room.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF MONITORING OF COLLEGE ACTIVITIES BY AFFILIATING UNIVERSITIES

The affiliating universities are duty bound to monitor the working of their affiliated colleges. Gnanam (1990) recommended that the universities should draw up an academic calendar every year listing the dates of admissions, schedule of academic terms, vacation, holding of examinations, declaration of results etc. Each of the affiliating university has a college
development council, which is responsible for monitoring the activities of the colleges including granting affiliation. There is inertia in CDCs. For instance, it was found that one college conducted its test/examination for 1st year students in November 2002 and the university examination for the said students was held seven months later in July 2003. The CDCs should undertake academic audit of the affiliated colleges every year. They should encourage the colleges to have self assessment of their programs every year including follow up studies conducted on their ex-students and ex-teachers.

**GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT FOR UTILIZING STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE SELF LEARNING IN STUDENTS**

There are certain strategies that promote self learning among students. Some of these are: Distribution at the beginning of the session scheme of teaching to be followed by each teacher to students, Preparation of lecture/activity synopses by teachers, and distributing them to students at least a week earlier, Preparation of list further reading materials on each topic and circulating it to students, Preparation of question bank on each paper and keeping it in the reading room for use by students, Preparation by teachers of a list of reading materials available in library on each topic and evaluating its suitability for a class and keeping it in library for use by the students, In case of language subjects there should be efforts to make students habitual of consulting dictionary, thesaurus etc. in classroom activities, at least for one week in each session. Taking students on a visit to library racks to make them acquainted with books on concerned subjects, giving regular written assignments to students and giving written as well as oral feedback individually and in groups and giving reading assignments to students and encouraging them to participate in seminars and other types of activities that need to be introduced.

**MAKING PROVISION FOR PEER FEEDBACK ON CLASSROOM TEACHING**

No teacher is a perfect teacher. The drawbacks, if any, cannot be fully perceived by an individual. The perception about quality in teaching depends on one's experiences. Hence, all suggestions given by peers may not be acceptable to an individual. With this limitation in mind, the teachers may ask their colleagues to sit in their classes and give suggestions after the class is over. The Education Commission 1966 suggested for such a provision, especially for new teachers.

"They should be encouraged to attend the lecturer of some senior teachers of their subject and study their methods of teaching and ways of handling their students. After the lecture, the senior teacher can discuss his methods and techniques with his junior colleagues who should be free to express their opinions and raise questions. If this is done, they would not mind if later the head of the department or some other senior colleague visits their classes. It is wrong to think that such visits are derogatory and should be avoided. If the college community is a fellowship of learning, such interchange of visits should be acceptable.

However, a study conducted in an autonomous college, found that majority of teachers did not favor evaluation of teaching by peers. In a seminar on quality in higher education many teachers said that junior teachers could not provide feedback to seniors.
CONCLUSION

India with its huge and ever-growing middle class base has become a potential market for the international community. Companies across the world have an eye on this huge consumer base. To cater properly they need to set up their plants/distribution network/after sales service centers in India.

This emerging trend has pushed the requirement of professional managers to man these organizations based in India and also to man the Indian organizations, to face the competition posed by them.

Due to this fact, the future of management education in India is seems to be very bright and looking beneath the surface, we find that our strengths are many and our potential limitless, so the onus now lies on us to harness and develop this potential to the best of our capabilities. Indian management institutes can face the challenge posed by the local and global players and achieve superior performance level and succeed only if they are able to remove the duality in the system and by bridging the gap between the quality management institutes operating at the national level and the regional level institutes this dreams of success will become a reality if the management institutes at the regional level re-orient themselves operationally and strategically and be proactive to change and adopt.

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