

# Making Management Education in India Meet Global Quality

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Management education in India is under increasing demand with close on a lakh of students passing out each year. Demand has especially increased after changes towards privatization and globalization, offering great potential to aspiring MBA students.

According to the Business Standard dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 21, 2014 “India’s Marquee B-schools make a dash for global recognition”. Tangible benefits of international accreditation attract global faculty and students besides helping justify higher fees. Further, B-schools are not satisfied with a single accreditation, but want the triple-crown, namely: Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), Association of MBAs (AMBA) and European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS).

As of now, 6 Business Schools are AMBA accredited, 2 B-schools are AACSB accredited and 2 have received EQUIS accreditation. Quest for such accreditations force B-schools to revamp their curriculum and mode of functioning according to globally acceptable standards. Global accreditation helps all stakeholders:

- ❖ **Students:** narrows down choices from the overcrowded list of B schools
- ❖ **Institutes:** helps attract international students and faculty
- ❖ **Rankings:** allows better global ranking, increases credibility, status and exposure
- ❖ **Employers:** campus placement list often includes international companies and MNCs

The article in Business Standard concludes that the increasing awareness of the Indian student could make international accreditation the most important yardstick they consider to choose their B-school.

## II. GAPS: GOALS AND REALITY

While all B-schools can vie for international recognition, the facts on the ground are grim:

Surveys conducted by Business Today (published in 2013) reveal that Indian B-schools are searching for means to add to their brand value by participating in global surveys and procuring international accreditations. Out of the 250 – 300 schools that allowed themselves to be rated, only 6 schools included in the survey have actually been able to acquire international accreditation that is the accepted stamp of global quality. This shows that:

- ❖ Indian Business Schools compare poorly with many of their global counterpart, which could arise from a multitude of reasons
- ❖ Many of the 2000 plus management schools recognized by the AICTE have minimal faculty with little practical experience in management
- ❖ research work at these B schools is inadequate and of a poor quality
- ❖ dependence on foreign literature is more than practical experiences of the Indian ethos
- ❖ Indian system of management education is more money-based than value-based

These salient and several other gaps need to be addressed in order for management schools in India to be on par with their international counterparts and stand shoulder to shoulder with the best of its kind.

<b>HOME AND THE WORLD</b>	
Only six B-schools out of the top 100 have international accreditation. They are:	
<b>Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A)</b>	<b>EQUIS</b>
<b>T.A. Pai Management Institute (TAPMI)</b>	<b>AACSB</b>
<b>Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (IIM-K)</b>	<b>AMBA</b>
<b>Management Development Institute (MDI), Gurgaon</b>	<b>AMBA</b>
<b>International Management Institute (IMI), Delhi</b>	<b>AMBA</b>
<b>S.P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR), Mumbai</b>	<b>AMBA</b>

Note: EQUIS = European Quality Improvement System    AMBA = The Association of MBAs  
AACSB = The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business    Source: *BT-MDRA*

Source: <http://businesstoday.intoday.in/story/india-best-b-schools-2013-listing-parameters/1/199110.html>

Management education in India has grown in leaps and bounds over the last few years, the number of Management Institutes increasing from 80,464 in 2005 – 2006 to 1,79,561 in 2009 – 2010. ([www.aicte.ernet.in](http://www.aicte.ernet.in))

Considering the speed and nature of changes that are taking place in the global economic, political and technological arena, the quality of management education has to be revamped to match Indian infrastructural quality to global standards.



Source: [www.philau.edu](http://www.philau.edu)

Committees set up to review management education in India were:

- ❖ Nanda committee
- ❖ Kurien committee
- ❖ Ishwar Dayal committee and
- ❖ Management education review committee.

Lacunae in Indian management education, as discovered by these committees were, briefly:

- ❖ Faculty shortage and quality of faculty was poor
- ❖ Research work neglected or minimal
- ❖ Industry interaction negligible
- ❖ Faculty development programs not in place
- ❖ Course material needs to be modified to suit Indian context
- ❖ Infrastructure including library was poor, except in top B-schools.

### III. MAJOR ISSUES REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT

The salient areas where quality improvements are a crying need if Indian B-schools are to achieve their aim of acquiring the triple-crown international certification are as follows:

- **Governing Body:** the apex body for governing technical and management education in India is the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and its subsidiary, the Board of Management Studies. However, since management education requirements are different from that of technical education, it may be a worthwhile option to consider a body specifically dedicated to issues related to management education improvement and governance.
- **Faculty:** most B-schools experience a paucity of well-qualified, experienced faculty. This in turn is bound to affect the quality of education that is imparted, resulting in poor quality MBA pass-outs and poor placement records. This can be traced back to the lack of funds to appoint the kind of faculty that is required for the job. Many institutes offer low salaries and more than the fair share of teaching hours, leading to drop in quality of education
- **Ethics and value-based education:** one of the major reasons for poor quality in management education is the lack of value-based education. Ethical paucity is equally a spoiler. Including these issues into the curriculum of management education could make for a better value system and higher quality of student outputs
- **Research:** globally, management education is in a constantly changing flux, dependent as it is on the volatility and growth of the industrial scenario. It is therefore very essential that faculty and students alike keep abreast of the ever-changing requirements in the subject through constant research work that will keep their knowledge up-to-date.
- **Curriculum design & development:** the daunting task of developing an industry-requirement based curriculum is matched only by the task of keeping it abreast of continuous developments. Curriculum should hence be periodically reviewed in the light of developments in the industry and altered to ensure that students are industry-ready.

This however is presently not being done, since syllabus change requires unending bureaucratic nod, while private institutes find it difficult to update knowledge of current faculty or add new faculty.

- **Develop Industry – Institute interface:** any good business school must have a strong industry interface so that their students are exposed to the practical aspects of management rather than make do with bookish theoretical knowledge. Further, this interface makes them industry-ready and helps them find their niche in the industry faster. Industry experts' guest lectures, project work that take the students to the industry, various visits to industries and campus placement are various ways by which the ties can be strengthened.
- **Simulation:** it would also be a good exercise to simulate actual situations as problem-solving assignments where groups of students can brainstorm possible solutions. This inculcates in the students a sense of teamwork and focus.
- **Perspective vision:** teamwork situations also help students to learn to look at situations from different perspectives. Management routinely studies several perspectives before decision-making.
- **Global mindset:** faculty should help students to keep pace with global knowledge and skills in their field. For India to be a key player in the global arena, our future managers should be exposed to an optimum mix of teaching, training, learning, thinking and doing
- **Placement:** providing or assisting in placement of students in industry is an activity that actually is limiting academically speaking, but is a key factor in students opting for certain specific business schools. While the institute should not be looked at as an employment bureau, students should nonetheless feel secure in the job opportunities that open up for them at the end of the MBA course.

#### IV. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In addition to the above points that should be brought up to global standards, the following should also be kept in mind while designing / revamping curriculum:

##### Industry – Institution Interface

- First and foremost, the differences between industry and institution should be clearly understood. This will have a definitive effect on the manner and extent to which curriculum should be designed, developed, modified: (*from 'How to Improve Teaching Quality' by Richard Felder and Rebecca Brent*)
  - In industry, the true mission is relatively clear, and quality is relatively straightforward to define. In education, the true mission is complex and subject to endless debate, and quality is therefore almost impossible to define in an operationally useful manner.
  - In industry, quality is relatively easy to assess. In education, even if a definition of quality can be formulated and agreed upon, devising a meaningful assessment process is a monumental task.
  - In industry, the customer is relatively easy to identify and is always right, at least in principle. In education, those who might be identified as "customers" have contradictory needs and desires and may very well be completely wrong.
  - In industry, a clear chain of command usually exists, on paper and in fact. In education, a chain of command might exist on paper, but it is in fact relatively amorphous and nothing at all like its industrial counterpart.

##### Student Improvement Methods

- Felder and Brent go on to suggest steps that faculty could take to improve quality, with resource inputs from the administrators:
  - Define the knowledge, skills, and values that students should have.

- Define the instructional methods that will help students acquire the desired attributes, select the methods needed to assess the effectiveness of the instruction, and estimate the resources (including provisions for faculty development) needed to implement both the instruction and the assessment.
- The administration should commit to providing resources required to begin as well as sustain the program. Appropriate incentives for faculty members should also be spelt out.
- Formulate a detailed implementation plan
- Implementation of the plan.
- Assess the results and modify the plan as necessary to move closer to the desired outcomes.
- Involve students in project work, both classroom and fieldwork
- Inculcate entrepreneurial and innovative qualities in students by making them take initiatives, be persistent, nurture an attitude of seeking out information, problem-solving, risk-taking and self-confidence
- The quality of the management education program can be best improved by getting as many faculty members as possible on board to implement the methods that would best suit the goals of the program.
- Several learning exercises could be included into the curriculum as a means of practical training:
  - *Recalling prior material.* One minute to recapitulate points of the previous lecture
  - *Responding to questions.* Responses can come from individuals or small groups depending upon whether the questions are from previous lectures or based on teamwork assignments.
  - *Problem solving.* Techniques to breakdown a larger problem into a series of steps, such as paraphrasing the problem statement, sketching a schematic or flow chart, predicting a solution, writing the relevant equations, solving them or outlining a solution procedure, and checking and/or interpreting the solution.
  - *Explaining written material.* TAPPS (thinking-aloud pair problem solving) is a powerful activity to help students understand. Ideally, students are put in pairs and given a problem to solve. Explanation of each step of the problem-solving exercise helps determine the understanding levels of the students.
  - *Analytical, critical, and creative thinking.* Students are given a case study and asked to list assumptions, problems, errors, or ethical dilemmas; likewise, they could explain a technical concept; or find the logical flaw in an argument; or predict the outcome of an experiment or explain an observed outcome in terms of course concepts; or choose from among alternative answers or designs or models or strategies and justify the choice made. A number of such exercises help students to develop perspective thinking skills.
  - *Generating questions and summarizing.* The students may be given a minute to come up with two good questions about the preceding lecture segment or to summarize the major points in the lecture just concluded.
- Using cooperative learning methods in classroom will help students develop and fine-tune their teamwork skills such as:
  - *Positive interdependence.* Students learn that the team is only as strong as the weakest member. In trying to get better at their skills they learn to pull up the entire team on an ‘all for one and one for all’ motto.
  - *Individual accountability.* Team members are all responsible for the totality of the final solution, not merely the part that they were asked to solve.
  - *Face-to-face promotive interaction.* Team members learn to provide mutual feedback and guidance, challenge each another, and work toward consensus.
  - *Appropriate use of teamwork skills.* Teamwork encourages students to help develop, exercise and apply leadership, communication, conflict management, and decision-making skills.

- *Regular self-assessment of team functioning.* Team members routinely set goals, have periodic assessments of both achievements and their interpersonal skills at working together. Obviously, this will mean a P-D-C-A approach to cooperative learning skills.

### Faculty Improvement & Evaluation

Meaningful evaluation of teaching is mainly reflected by an assessment of learning outcomes. Most institutions use student assessment to evaluate teaching. While this is an important component it surely is not the only method of assessment. Current trends include:

- Performance-based assessment instead of standardized tests
- Learning-based assessment of student development instead of teaching-based ones
- Uses naturalistic approaches that are embedded in actual teaching rather than on viewing assessment as an add-on.

Burke mentions that assessments that could evaluate students' knowledge of content and skills would include tests as well as exhibitions, project reports, journals, checklists, graphics, interviews, etc.

Systems should be in place for continuous improvement of faculty through research work, participation at seminars and conferences and keeping them abreast of latest developments in the fields of both their subject as well as in teaching.

## V. CONCLUSION

Management education is more relevant now and in the years to come than it was in the past. When the Indian B-schools adopt a holistic system of education that is in tune with global competitiveness through a strategic implementation of TQM, the industry – institute interface will be a veritable partnership. The focus will be on attitude, corporate awareness and grooming the managers of tomorrow.

In such a hallowed time, MBA students would feel like this:



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