

Management Education – A new paradigm

India would be a developed nation by 2020 – so dreams our beloved former President.

India, therefore, would need a large pool of high caliber engineers, doctors, managers, scientists and the like. They would be the products of the Indian higher education system.

But is our higher education system geared up? Are the products coming out of the system suitable enough for taking up the challenge? Let us not forget what Mr. Narayana Murthy avers – “75 % of Indian engineering and management graduates are not suitable for their jobs”. Why? The reasons are not hard to find, if one takes a close look at the way the system works.

An education system would throw up good products only if the major sub-systems of intake, teaching and valuation are of good robust quality with the objective of providing appropriate knowledge. But our system seems to be oriented towards degree – not knowledge or education. Many universities have become exam conducting bodies and not knowledge delivery centers. On the other side of the divide, IITs & IIMs generate clones of the west, hence severely short on understanding of the Indian needs.

Indian Needs

We need to introspect on some questions about the Indian situation, before we can generate the answers.

Despite the “syllabus” being similar to elsewhere in the world, why are our students not of the same quality?

Why is fuel costlier in India, despite getting crude oil from same sources as most others?

Why do most of our infrastructure projects are of poor quality, have cost overruns and take years to complete?

Why are our cities dirty, crowded and potholed?

Why is a country like China able to grow faster, despite having had similar problems of population, poverty etc.

We may further ask ourselves:

Are we short on knowledge of technology, medicine, law, finance etc? Do we lack natural resources? Do we have less manpower? Are we less intelligent?

The evident response is – NO!. We have all that is basically needed for the country to prosper. Then, why are we the way we are?

The answer is - We lack Management Skills!

It is this lack that is becoming a drag on our movement towards prosperity. We may know what to do, but not how to do effectively and efficiently. It is, therefore, clear that if India has to prosper at the envisaged speed, we need effective Management at all levels – from grass roots to highest branches of the economy.

We need street level managers to effectively implement the plans made in the boardrooms. It is known that any plan is only as good as its implementation. Since, we do not give the tools of management to the implementers, most of our plans go awry. Management, in India, should be looked at more as a systematic way of working and efficient work ethics at all levels rather than elite and instructional way of getting the work done by others.

This can be achieved if our education system recognizes the importance of Management as the basic economic need - as a complementary stream - and not as a parallel or distinct course to be learnt only by a few.

Management Education

Pure sciences, technology, medicine, law and even arts, including music and painting, tend to have certain underlying theories and principles which can and are applied more or less universally. This is not the case with management. Management is the only stream which is both science and art; both knowledge and skill. Education in other streams can impart the *know-how* while management education should also teach the *know why, when, which, by whom, how many etc. etc.* Other streams are deterministic while management is situational. The later cannot be learnt the same way as the former.

Despite management being situational, most of our management institutes normally teach the western concepts with scant regard to the Indian situation. It should be remembered that western concepts may work for their type of economy, but may not be fully suitable elsewhere. Japan and China understood this and developed their own management methods. We, in India, still blindly follow the western methods. One look at the syllabi of most of our B Schools and Universities will bear out this fact.

Further, management is a practice based profession and not information based vocation. Since, the same solutions cannot be applied to seemingly similar situations, practice of management is of utmost importance. But, this aspect has been given very little attention in the curricula.

The merits of the above thoughts are evident. However, management education in India is still mired in teaching management through rote method of cramming and reproduction of theories in more than 95% of colleges and institutes which operate within the boundaries set by government run agencies. The results are for all to see: similar outdated syllabi with mostly western concepts without Indian applicability; ability of reproduction of crammed information as a measure of managerial competence; the resultant inability of most of our management graduates to efficiently and effectively handle practical situations.

Ironically, most of us still think that a degree in management makes the student a good manager. It has been rightly said that *"A degree does not make a person worthy. The person should become worthy of the degree he / she acquires."*

Qualities of a good institute for India

Recognizing the requirements for India's growth story, there are certain evident qualities which a good institute in India should possess.

1. **Value Addition:** Management education in India, unlike developed countries, is controlled by government agencies. Most colleges and institutes end up following those basic guidelines as *maximum requirement* and not as a *minimum norm*, which they are meant to be. They hardly add any value to this lowest common denominator. This results in most colleges being clones of one another. Hence, a good institute for India would be the one which adds value to the basic norms set by the government & universities by including the aspects which will impart practical skills & knowledge, over and above the syllabus.
2. **Comprehensive Coverage:** Most management colleges and institutes in India offer courses only at Post Graduate Level. Undergraduate level is not under the purview of AICTE, which is the controlling authority of management education. This makes management education an elite activity, as if management is meant only for a few as "higher education". Since India needs management ethos from grassroots level onwards, a good institute would be the one which offers courses at Undergraduate as well as Postgraduate levels. The objective would be to inculcate "*managerial temper*" right from the impressionable age.

3. **Conducive Environment:** In India, concrete buildings with dingy classrooms are a majority and are, ironically, considered places suitable for learning. The noise and pollution from the streets are classmates of students! India has a tradition of "gurukul" system, away from the city's hustle & bustle in natural environs, which was considered necessary for imbibing knowledge with mental and physical tranquility. A good institute, therefore, would be that which operates from an eco friendly, natural and tranquil environment, but is equipped with all the modern facilities and amenities needed for modern learning.
4. **Career Management:** The emphasis on "placement" has converted most Indian institutes into placement agencies. They do not realize that students should be groomed for careers and not only to get the first jobs. Since India needs efficient implementers, to complement good planners, a good institute for India would be that which has robust programs for practice of management in addition to theories of management. A large portion of the study time should be devoted to management skills and practice. This will make them ready for their careers and not only to get jobs. The concept is born out of the fact that *"to practice what one learns in theory is more difficult in practice than in theory"*
5. **Corporate Pedagogy:** The academic regulations want the institutes and colleges to have full time faculty as mandatory. These faculty are mostly career academicians, who have very little exposure to the corporate world. This results in the knowledge delivery at theoretical level. At the most they refer to published case studies without themselves having firsthand experience. Further, a non flexible set of faculty, does not allow the college to provide expert knowledge of specific fields. Management being a practice oriented field of knowledge, a good institute should have a judicious mix of full time faculty and practicing professionals (or those who have had vast experience in the corporate world) as visiting faculty. This would enable students to learn from practitioners rather than scholars of management.
6. **Professional Promoters:** Any organization can generate appropriate value only if the promoters have clear vision and the experience to convert that vision into reality. In India, politicians, religious groups and people of similar ilk promote educational institutes, with hardly any firsthand experience in the education they claim to provide. The quality, consequently, suffers since the promoters' preoccupation is with things other than education. A good institute for India, therefore, would be the one which is not only promoted but full time managed by professionals.

A dispassionate look at the above criteria will show that the arguments cannot be refuted. Out of the 1400 odd institutions providing management education in India, very few have recognized the value of this new paradigm.

While the above is the recommended model, it is important for any institution to translate this ideological model into operative systems, which can effectively deliver on the envisaged promises in practical terms. One of the institutes which has imbibed and implemented this new paradigm is the **International Academy of Management and Entrepreneurship (IAME), Bangalore**. IAME, in fact, passes the muster on all the above criteria of a B School for the resurgent India. This makes IAME graduates uniquely valuable to the Industries they serve and the country to which they belong

IAME has adopted 4 unique principles of Management Education to translate the ideology into practical systems.

1. Holistic Education

- a. **Full spectrum of management education :** IAME offers a host of programs both at Graduate and Postgraduate levels, with an option for smooth transition from graduate to postgraduate levels. The objective is to inculcate the "management temper" from the inception of professional education.
- b. **Value addition :** IAME incorporates many programs in addition to those mandated by universities, so that the students develop into true value corporate citizens.
- c. **Composite Courses:** IAME recognizes that each student has specific career aspirations. However, most degrees, in India, are discreet and independent, thereby robbing students of an opportunity at the cost of the other. IAME offers unique Composite Courses at PG level, so that a student has an option for taking two degrees simultaneously within the same time frame of 2 years.

2. **Practice and Application:** Special emphasis is given to practice and application of management theories.
 - a. **Management Skills Proficiency (MSP)** is a unique program spread over the entire duration of the program, rather than only a few days of soft skills training which most institutes do, more as a formality.
 - b. **Applied Management** is a program which involves special sessions every week where the theories learnt are put into practice in the similar way as science subjects have laboratory sessions
3. **Corporate Interface :**
 - a. **Corporate Interface Program (CIP)** is a special program at IAME, which includes corporate internships and practice based projects. IAME's PGPM program devotes majority of the 2nd year to internships and projects, which carries specific credits and marks. The objective is to make the students 100% job ready by having 60% theory and 40% practice
 - b. **Faculty profile** at IAME is a judicious mix of full time and visiting teachers, most of whom either have vast industry experience in the past or are currently working in industry. This gives the students the valuable insight into prevalent corporate practices in addition to theory.
 - c. **Guest lecturers** by eminent corporate personalities ensures continuous interface with the industry.
4. **Conducive environment :**
 - a. **Eco Friendly campus** of IAME provides ideal settings for learning in natural habitat, away from the hustle, bustle and pollution of crowded city.
 - b. **Modern Amenities** include Wi Fi enabled campus, smart classrooms, well stocked library and all other modern facilities needed for management education
 - c. **Self sufficient campus** includes residential facilities separately for boys and girls with cafeteria.
 - d. **Recreational facilities** at IAME incorporates a swimming pool, play area and yoga sessions for distressing.

The success of the principles is evidenced by the fact that IAME has the unprecedented record of 100% job offers for its students from the first batch itself.

The new paradigm in Management Education, thus, is not only a food for thought but has been proven as a successful model for India thru the example set by IAME. One can visit www.iame.org.in to get a glimpse of this unique, effective and successful experiment with the new paradigm in management education.

A sneak peek of IAME

Eco friendly campus



Interactive modern classrooms



Practice based learning



Interface with industry



Residential facilities



Recreation & De-stressing

