

Management Education & Institutes

Management Guru Speaks (Loud & Clear)

By **M.P. Sinha**

Chairman & Executive Director, GHRDC

During the course of CSR-GHRDC Survey 2011, we realised that Management education in India is confronted with several major issues which have adversely affected the quality of Management education and institutes. In our view, we felt that it is a period of recession of Management education and many institutes, which perhaps did not take appropriate action, to maintain or improve the quality of education, have been badly affected and their survival has become doubtful. While we realise that, with the growing population of India and Management education having proven of past record, to directly or indirectly benefit the corporate world or the societies, we perhaps need more good Management institutes as opposed to the likely closure of many B-Schools in India in the present scenario. Looking at the various indicators, which have influenced the current situation of downfall, we observed that some of them are linked with lack of quality faculty, lack of good governance, lack of understanding and value of Management education, lack of good intake of students, return against these investments (high cost and fees of education) and finally lack of appropriate regulations in support of Management education and so on. During our visits to several B-Schools in India, while realising they were facts, we sought opinions and views of eminent leading Management gurus who are not only Heads of top B-Schools in the country but they are also founder members of Management education in India in different forms. Keeping the above facts in view, we sought written views of these leaders which are reproduced in brief form.

International Institute of Management, New Delhi

Dr. Pritam Singh, *Director General*



“In my thinking, the quality of faculty is the most important and critical factor for creating an institution of excellence. In fact, institutions are not known by the infrastructure, by large campuses but by the intellectual prowess of the faculty. I, therefore, consider faculty as the soul of any academic institution.

Great institutions are also holistic, fully integrated and highly engaged in creation, dissemination and application of knowledge through research, teaching, consultancy and executive education. Unfortunately, there are very few institutions in our country which are truly holistic and integrated focussing equally on creation, dissemination and application of knowledge.

Another important problem in business school is ‘Blind Leading the Blind’. There are very few faculty members, who have the experience of managing and solving problems in real managerial world and, therefore, academic delivery becomes highly theoretical devoid of sharing practical experiences and pragmatic thoughts. This can be possible only if the faculty members are actively involved in research, training and consultancy which can be possible only through holistic and integrated business schools.”

IIM-C, Kolkata

Prof. Sougata Ray, *Dean*



“The twin concerns for inclusive human development and preserving ecology have brought the sustainability agenda at the centre stage of good governance for business and non-business organisations around the world. The business organisations in India and across the globe are also recognising the need to address the social and environmental impact of their activities by innovative strategies for the rural market and customers at the bottom of the pyramid, which, together with profits, are popularly known as the ‘triple bottom line’ issues of Sustainable Development. Therefore, there is an emerging need that the Management schools around the world not only attach greater importance to research on issues of sustainability, but start incorporating the Sustainability Thinking in the Management curriculum also. They have to embrace and integrate sustainability education in the Management curriculum in such a way that it develops awareness and appreciation of sustainability issues and promotes Sustainability Thinking among Management students and professionals. In her Golden Jubilee year, IIM-Calcutta pledges to play a pioneering role in promoting the integration of Sustainability Thinking in Management Education.”

SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai

Prof. Rajan Saxena, VC



“Management education in India suffers from a severe faculty shortage. In the first place, we do not have an adequate number of trained Management teachers and to cap it, the number that is there does not meet the quality benchmark as prescribed by accreditation agencies like AACSB or EQUIS or even NAAC or NBA in India.

Relevance of the faculty is yet another issue today. The relevance is determined by the work the faculty has done after acquiring Ph.D., which means publication of research papers and cases developed by them.

Given such a definition of faculty quality and current state of faculty research, it is no wonder that the quality of Management education has been a cause of concern. To augment faculty base, as also improve the quality of faculty, it is necessary for the Management Schools and Government to invest in faculty development.

Globally, there is a trend towards admitting students with experience. It is generally observed that students who have had work experience of about 2 to 3 years are able to better understand and, relate their experience to the concepts and principles in Management.

Placements continue to remain a differentiating feature among top business schools and others. Hence, when our colleagues in Management education say that Management institutions have become placement agencies, I do not agree. Yes, an over focus on placement is wrong, but one cannot ignore the fact that industry forms our client system and hence we need to accept that the quality of our product can only be assessed by the quality of placements.

Having said so, I also believe that the opportunity to create new enterprise and products and develop market in India is substantively high. This provides an opportunity for entrepreneurship. Today, Business Schools should also prepare graduates for an entrepreneurial and other alternative career in other sectors like social sector education.”

Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship, Bangalore

J. Philip, President

“Faculty quality and shortage remains the No. 1 problem in Management education or for that matter in all types of professional education in the country. A partial answer to that is possibly to invite to the academia retiring senior executives from industry with MBA/PGDM background. But alas, that cannot be since AICTE rules don't permit it! A

K.V. Kamath, a Naina Lal Kidwai or a B. Muthuraman could not be a Professor at an Indian Business School since they don't have a Ph.D.



India is perhaps the only country where fresh graduates are admitted to the MBA/PGDM Programme. This cannot be reversed now. But one is happy to see a new development. The percentage of students with experience in our B-Schools is now on the rise.

Indian B-Schools, particularly the PGDM schools, are deeply committed to placing their students in good companies. In fact, top Indian B-Schools are even a shade better than the best of US Schools. But, unfortunately, in many B-Schools, it is now a year-long activity, consigning academics to the background almost for the whole of the second year of the course.”

IBS-MUMBAI

Prof. Y. K. Bhushan, Senior Adviser & Head

“Most Business Schools faced three major challenges during the last year—inability to attract sufficient number of Management education aspirants, paucity of high-calibre faculty with industry experience, and lack of recruiters to place the students at respectable salaries. The entry of a large number of Business Schools aggravated the situation.



Business Schools that thrived despite fierce competition had few things in common—infrastructure and environment conducive to learning, good blend of academicians and corporate professionals on the faculty, emphasis on learning over teaching, use of contemporary case studies, live projects and industry internship, and strong corporate relationships.

Placement continues to be a principal differentiator of Business School's standing in the eyes of students. Increase in the number of experienced students and focus on corporate relations are going to be a part of the strategic thrust in all good schools.”

XLRI-Jamshedpur

Fr. E. Abraham, S.J., Director

“The demand for Management education today has reached an all time high. With rapid changes in technology and new requirements of the corporate world, only an updated curriculum can ensure that the MBA graduate is really equipped to face the challenging demands and responsibilities that his job calls for.



The demand today is for qualified and competent faculty who can teach courses that are in tune with the changing times. The trend of MBA aspirants, however, is to gather some work experience in industry before pursuing a Management degree.”

IIM-Kozhikode

Prof. Debashis Chatterjee, Director,



“You don’t get quality faculty on a platter. You will have to create them. We need one of the most prolific faculty development programmes in the country.

We simply have a culture of meritocracy and diversity. We try to give importance to social skills and managerial mindset that would make our students fit for professional career.

Work experience does matter in cutting-edge Management education and most of the schools have their own yardsticks for this. What is more concerning is the unsatisfactory female-to-male ratio at the IIMs. We need to give importance to social skills and the managerial mindset that would make students fit for the jobs they would pursue.”

EIILM-Kolkata

Dr. R.P. Banerjee, Director



“The Management education demands a different profile of educators than the normal to fit in the dynamism of the market. It has been observed that the Management educators are either academicians or professionals in their field of work. This has made their outlook and mode of interaction with society in general and students of Management in particular, in a manner, skewed towards their domain of knowledge and expertise. I visualise this as a myopic personality involved in the work of a holistic interaction and delivery. This is a key factor which is likely to influence the future of managerial manpower towards an absolutist position, either proficient in academics or conversant in the profession he or she is into.

The lesson of Management requires the basis of understanding among the participants or students in some reasonable degree of experience in the related field. Increasingly, more and more freshers are inducted in the Management programme, thereby, diluting the prospect of getting students with a fair degree of experience for different Management programmes.

This phenomenon of the market is sure to infuse some degree of disillusionment among some leading brands about the B-School pass outs. A mix of experienced and good

faculty of knowledge, if properly nurtured, would lead to an ideal situation where the companies would like to have more and more of the same brand than testing one against the other over a period of time.”

Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

Fr. PT Joseph, S.J., Director



“The Quality of Faculty has been a point of concern over the past one year. Even though a large number of high quality MBAs graduate every year in India, but there are very few who seek to complete their Ph.D. and pursue a career in academics. Therefore, the degree of quality expected in a Management faculty is not available today. While there are high quality faculty available, they are in short supply considering the huge demand for qualified and quality-conscious faculty members in Management education in India.

The last one year has seen more students with work experience being admitted in business schools across the country. This is partly due to the fact that Engineering graduates seeking Management degrees usually join the business schools with some work experience under their belt. With the rising number of Engineering graduates joining Business Schools for their Management degrees, the trend of more students taking admissions having work experience would increase.”

Goa Institute of Management, Goa

P.F. X. D’Lima, Director



“Faculty salaries have risen as they should have, so as to attract a better quality of faculty to the academics field. However, with the mushrooming of a large number of new Management institutes, good experienced faculty are more difficult to come by. It, therefore, becomes essential for Management schools to attract them young with better all-round facilities and to train them at the workplace before they undertake full courses on their own.

Renowned Management institutes in the West insist that Management education is an exercise of sharing business experiences with the faculty acting as facilitators to guide as to which is the better experience, or there are even better ones that those shared.

On the other hand, there is a firm school of thought that believes that freshers with good academic capability can raise queries that experienced candidates may not be inclined to do. And this is felt to be an essential plus point.



Career planning rather than placement should ideally be the objective of a Management institute. However, for most students, placement is their main objective of coming to Management school, and obtaining the highest salary appears to be their prime objective.

This could be self-defeating in the individual manager's quest for excellence and happiness. It is, therefore, important for Management institutes to strengthen their support for career guidance and to stress on the need to choose a career to which the individual is best suited and one in which he would find the best achievement and happiness in contributing to.

The most critical area where we need change is the appointment of the State Fee-Fixation Committee. However, the Committee has relevance in the aided schools. We submit that, for unaided Management schools, it has lost its significance and is today the most initial bottleneck for increase in education quality which, in Management, involves a higher cost and consequently higher fees."

Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development, Pune

Prof. K.S. Subramanian, Director



"Management education is at the crossroads. The theories of today may not seem to be relevant for tomorrow, and the awareness of tomorrow being absent in realistic terms, educationists are grappling with the problem involving how to educate.

The concept of leadership is also undergoing transformation both for its traits and competencies.

In these circumstances, what you require is well-read faculty with the ability to innovate and crystallise the thought process for bringing in relevance to Management education for the generation of tomorrow. This has become a far cry and, hence, faculty availability has already reached the point of inflection. On top of it, there are severe

restrictions placed on net certification and Ph.D. level of the faculty to be accepted as faculty under UGC and AICTE guidelines. Both are not co-related.

The overall level of business atmosphere has not been very positive on MBA market. There was a drop last year almost to the extent of 28%, and we should not be surprised if it persists or even increases. There is likelihood of severe fallout in third and fourth grade institutions as a result of the above because they have to discount their fees structure or cut down the costs, both of which look to be tough proposals. There has to be a high level of innovation in the environment, if we need to attract and retain experienced students from the corporate. Basic business sense will not be the driving force for them.

This brings us back to the issue that placement-oriented institutes are going to go through a tough time since their academics is not necessarily in place. There are compromises, but institutes rich in academics and research will make a difference in attracting and retaining good quality students."

Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad

Prof. R.K. Mishra, Director

"The faculty in a Management institute should have a deep research engagement, industry orientation, pedagogical expertise and inter-disciplinary background. A large number of Management institutes did not have such faculty due to the handicap of infrastructure, compensation, and connectedness with the industry. Management institutions abroad admit students having work experience ranging from two to five years. One area in which Management institutions in India have not taken a lead is the exposure to the students of different walks of real economy, society and polity through the interaction with people of eminence, expertise, knowledge and ideas. This is very vital if Indian Management education has to become holistic in its content and delivery."





K.J. Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research, Mumbai

Dr. Satish Ailawadi, Director

“A prospective candidate for the faculty position of a B-School should be having adequate corporate experience along with research-oriented mindset. To get such candidates is a challenge and the time is ripe enough to groom such faculty members. The role of corporate in developing good faculty base cannot be underestimated. Unfortunately, in India there is very little interaction between the B-Schools and the corporate. In many forums it is heard that the corporate find B-School graduates unemployable. But does the Corporate Inc. of India ever realise that they have failed in their responsibility in being proactive and offering their services to academia in terms of faculty and student development? In fact, the corporate should come forward and provide opportunities of experiential learning to the faculty members.



It has been observed that to relate the classroom teachings with the real life business scenario, the students require some exposure to the way organisations work. In order to have better value addition in the class room, it is imperative that students should have a prior experience of minimum 2 years in any of the functional areas of businesses. In my opinion, two-year work experience should be mandatory requirement for admission to a Post Graduate programme in Management.”

Institute of Management, Nirma University of Science & Technology, Ahmedabad

C. Gopalkrishna, Director

“There are quality related issues pertaining to business education today, though this may not be a serious problem in the case of the top 100 B-Schools in the country. The reasons perhaps are very many.



For example, business education has been expanding in the country phenomenally in the recent times especially in view of the opportunities available as a result of faster economic growth during the last ten years. The expansion in business education has created serious shortages of good instructors, especially in view of the generally poor standards in the primary, secondary and higher education in the country. In spite of the better salaries for teachers in colleges and universities today, the general preference of good students from good institutions is still towards the industry.

Another aspect is the facilities available for training faculty. While the sector has expanded, training of future Management instructors has not been getting any serious attention. In addition, there is a need to expand the facilities for Ph.D. work in the good Management institutions in the country.

Perhaps, if the regulatory bodies (UGC & AICTE) could have some control of institutions not within their purview presently, some improvement could be achieved.”

We very much appreciate the wisdom expressed by all of them from different perspectives which, we believe, all stakeholders should take note of and give a serious thought to. Before it is too late, we need to act jointly with the Government policy makers, different bodies like AICTE, UGC, etc., academicians, Industries/recruiters, Management institute promoters, VC's, Directors, Deans, students, parents and public bodies through different forums to find ways to improve the current situation.