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# Quality in Management Education: Issues and Challenges

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## Overview

Global competition is changing the relationship between management education and business. Management education has become a major profession that attracts considerable attention across the world.

There is little doubt that the business education is growing at about 10-12 percent per annum. With the opening of education sector to the private players, the higher education in India has grown from access to education, to equity to access and now to the quality paradigm. Recent years have seen a steep rise in the number of management Institute in India, at the same time leading universities of U.K, U.S.A., Canada etc have opened their study centers in India. At present there are more than 1200 Institutes recognized by AICTE providing both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in management.

In fact education is a service organisation composed of a set of interrelated processes from which society is demanding better results. The need for ensuring quality in higher education system and its relevance in the contemporary times has been pointed out by not only educationist but also the industry professionals.

Though the concept of Quality has evolved from the manufacturing sector, the popularity of Quality its impact on customer psychology and resultant behavior exhibited has led analysts and researchers to regard "Quality as the single most important factor for long-success and survival.

Quality in education is a multi-faced concept with varying conceptualization that poses problems in formulating single, comprehensive definition. At the same time quality is difficult to measure in terms but can be felt, experienced and most important developed. It is an umbrella concept that includes with in its ambit, the quality inputs in the form of students, faculty, support staff and infrastructure.

According to a well-known perception of quality, quality is relative and dependent on the law of supply and demand. And in today's scenario quality is the fundamental criterion for the success of any B-School.

## Some of the major determinants of quality in management education: -

Academic Environment measured in terms of No. Books, Journal, audio-visual aid, computer facilities etc.

Physical Infrastructure measured in terms of No. Of classrooms, labs, campus, hostel facilities etc.

Industry Interface measured in terms in terms of No. of MDP's, EDP's organised , consultancy projects handled, No. of professionals from industry visiting institute.

Placements measured in terms of percentage of students placed by the institute, their salary offered etc.

Innovation measured in terms of the No. Of new courses offered modification and revision of curriculum.

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But when we talk about the quality in management education, the learning and teaching activities, the resultant output in form of enlightened students finding the job in various organisations becomes very important. The major feature that distinguishes top and ordinary business school is "what they teach and how they teach". Considerable attention is given to themes, content and pedagogy. Business schools like Kellogg's and Harvard have made their mark by focusing on the innovation in delivery of content. Dramatised presentation of a problem through role play, creating stress situation make student experience and come to most rational and logical decision and identify common mistakes. Kellogg's was the trendsetter in this field by introducing courses in leadership and business ethics.

But when it comes to measuring the teaching and learning process there are many issues connected with it. The process of teaching learning however cannot be directly quantified; in fact they are several indicators which directly or indirectly account for the parameters in educational institutes. World best B-Schools gives weightage to students coming with 3-5 year work experience. These students have already experienced the work environment and faced the major bottlenecks in operations; therefore they are higher on the learning curves. It is not only the quality of teachers, which is important, but also the taught, who is one of the fundamental entities in the process. The mode of selection of students for admission, their academic background, the years of experience, their attitude etc... all are very important. Equally important is the curriculum. Since management is practice-oriented domain, management education has to incorporate an element of on - the - job - training. There should be a right mix up of concepts, cases, exercises as well as simulations of themes such as business strategies, market planning, business negotiations leadership, team work business ethics etc... The major problem with the curriculum of major Indian B-School is lack of education material reflecting Indian context. Mostly the cases discussed in class are of US and European companies. But making reading material context specific needs the Indian business groups / companies to come forward and share material for case preparation and in company study. Although the ranking of B-School by various agencies have forced B-schools to pay closer attention to what its student want, at the same time the teaching

aids are equally important. Most of the B-School till date are using age old, while most of the contemporary schools have on line material displayed prior to the class and the student is expected to come prepared for discussion. Infact 25-40 % the curriculum should be made practical oriented. When we compare other B-Schools with IIM's we find that the research and consultancy is not given appropriate importance. In most of these B-Schools only the senior faculties are involved in consultancy project while in other fields the junior faculty are involved in research and consultancy.

Keeping these above things in mind the role of All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) becomes vital in deciding on the parameters to be used for measuring quality of management education. The national board of accreditation (NBA) was established under section 10 (U) of AICTE as act 52 of 1987, to access the quality in technical sector. The objective of NBA is to spell out specifically as to what is the criterion for assessment of quality. Identify parameters to quantitatively assess this criterion and assign weightage, validate the procedure by well-designed test run and establish appropriate benchmark. It is noteworthy that NBA accords Accreditation not to the Institute as a whole but to the programmes. Accreditation is a continuously evolving process that helps management schools to meet the challenges posed by dynamic context.

"Year 2002-2003 was declared as quality education year" by MHRD. Accreditation has been announced mandatory requirement for all technical institutes.

### **Major Observation and Suggestions**

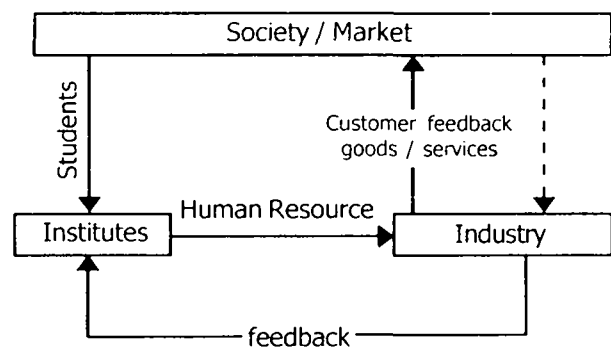
- One of the major concerns that have been expressed by corporate across the world is the lack of understanding of real life situation in fresh MBA students. The challenges of management education are to expose the students to real life situations by bringing experiential learning elements.
- Internationalization of business has forced the top B-School to develop executives with global orientation; the fresh pass outs management graduates lack the holistic vision to run an

organization. Management education should integrate and incorporate elements from all functional area, include quantitative and non-quantitative techniques, analytical tools, negotiation skills, and administrative and entrepreneurial skills. The approach should be to develop such abilities in students so that they can scan and analyse both domestic and international business environments.

- Most of the management schools focus to make student's specialist while when it comes to working in an organization, most of the organizations are looking for managers with holistic vision. In fact management Institute should have a preparatory module for the new students designed to build the basic fundamentals of statistics, accountancy, communications etc. This will give a strong foundation to the students with varied educational background to take functional specialisation paper with clear concepts and better understanding.
- Another the major problems with most of the second rug B-Schools is the quality of teachers or the facilitators. A teacher is made to teach different subjects ranging from marketing management, Quantitative Techniques Industrial Marketing . This forces the teacher to actually reproduce readymade teaching material in the class with little intellectual input from his / her end. It is necessary to promote good teachers to stick to their specialised area of interest for couple of year, and do valuable research and mould themselves as experts in the specific functional area.
- Management is in-fact a process of developing and mobilizing human resource, a resource which is later used as input to industry, that ultimately produces goods and services. Institute should keep a constant check on the feedback received from industry. And make necessary changes in curriculum, delivery system etc. to match with the changing industry needs and demands. Since the ultimate success of any B-Schools depends

on the placements of students and feedback form industry.

- There should be greater integration of educators and industry professionals. And this interaction should not only focus for placement but also towards research, consultancy, case study preparation, problem solving, guest lecturers, seminars and Industrial visits.
- One of the major cry in today's corporate world is the lack of business ethics. Young managers are found lacing the basic understanding of law and justice. Management schools should include paper on business ethics so as to inculcate ethics and value system in the students.
- Last but not the least the Management Institute should learn to manage themselves. Most of the management institutes, though they are teaching management, lack management skills in terms of organisational coordination and control. The management institutes should adopt the principals of corporate governance within themselves and maximize human resource capabilities and generate trust with the shareholders.



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