

**MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: REACHING THE UNREACHED THROUGH
MULTIMEDIA**

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ABSTRACT

To make optimum use of scarce resources, spread of management knowledge is essential. A number of initiatives taken recently in India to make management education not only cost effective but available to all. Through Internet and Multimedia Technology campus centric management education may be imparted through virtual classrooms, simulated labs and interactive hypermedia. The paper explores this aspect.

INTRODUCTION

To achieve the targets of rapid economic growth, India needs trained and professional managers. At present a sizable number of students are acquiring management education in India in campus centric institutions. The term 'management education' refers to the process of imparting concepts, skills and competencies to learners, which are essential to perform the task of managing. In a restricted sense professional management education is related to post graduate degree, however in a broader sense, to refer various generalized and specific degree or diploma courses and self-learning modules for In job aspirants.

Till now management education in the country is restricted to elite class students who

have good command over English language, convent education and belong to high or upper-middle class families. However, it is not fair to restrict management education only to a few intelligent and privileged students. Ordinary people do not have an easy access to this stream of education, which is arrested in ivory towers. In wake of technological advancement it is possible to make management education accessible to one and all and particularly to restricted groups viz. students living in geographically difficult terrains, rural areas, physically challenged, women, backward castes and tribes.

In National Education Policy (1986) the Government of India came with a slogan “education for all”. On the similar lines we may aspire that management education should be reachable to all entrepreneurs, small-scale industrialists, traders, marketers, housewives and people belonging to the downtrodden layer of the society. To make rational use of scarce resources and to keep pace with developed societies, it is essential for the country, that people should have the knowledge and skills of management.

Therefore it is worthwhile to know how it is possible to offer this stream of education to unreached segments of the society.

MULTI- MEDIA VIZ A VIZ MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Multimedia is a mix of varied media to transport information in several forms from one

point to another. Technology has enabled us that these points could be situated within one room, within a town or a country or located anywhere in the world. The forms of information could be text, audio or video (still or moving). And the terminal could be fixed or mobile, projection screen or television tube, notebook computer or PC.

Management education in India must be focused with the aim to share responsibility for bringing about a transformation in the “eco-socio” milieu in the country by producing change agents in the form of globally competent and competitive managers. To achieve this, management education has to have a symbiotic relation with IT and its application to the teaching in the form of education technology.

The tools for the delivery of education in Business Schools (B-Schools) has progressed from classroom aids like slide, overhead and LCD projectors to distance education tools like audio and video tapes, radio and television broadcasts, cable T.V., tele-education through satellite and video conferencing, floppy diskettes and CD-ROMs for large capacity data storage, networking via ERNET and INTERNET and a futuristic concept of bringing satellite channels directly to home by DTH service.

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

More opportunity for learning, more sites for learning, more methods for the delivery to learn and the key factor underlying such evolutionary processes is flexibility in imparting management education. The philosophy of education, which is, now gradually taking shape into a dualistic principle can further radicalize B-Schools by introducing management education via distance education methods. The exploration of distance education in to the area of management education has been one of the points of its experimentation. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India has aggressively and successfully introduced its management program which has target groups as professional / managerial and supervisory role holders. This is the breakaway from traditional management education, which in campus centric B-Schools of the country has as its target group as fresh graduates. The need to train and update professionals' skills then seriously emerges in the context of management education. Further this may also show the way for new avenues. The unexplored area yet to be focused are the Correspondence Course Directorates linked with almost one third of the conventional universities in the country may begin to offer management courses by utilizing advantages of multimedia technologies through distance mode. However, these institutes must ensure the following aspects:

- Quality of content
- Imbibing IT enabled teaching/ learning
- Cost consciousness
- Inbuilt flexibility in course duration, eligibility criteria, evaluation patterns etc.

The management program may cater to suit the needs of:

- Fresh graduates without work experience.
- Those who aspire learning while earning
- Women and far reached aspirants who cannot avail the facility in usual course.

For the first category care must be taken for employability and for the second clientele developmental/professional needs should be given adequate emphasis. The conventional universities in the country must, come forward in this regard to give a chance to learners who are not able to make it in Management Institutes because of fixed criteria and severe competition. Offering courses via the distance mode will have to take consideration of the 'new' conceptualizations of educational system accounted for above technology, as a teaching learning factor and the media will be the compendium of instructions and learning. The other way of looking at the problem put here will be to

prepare modules as per professional needs in the functional areas. These may be short-term, capsule courses. By adopting such a strategy, we will reach to unreached people and provide them knowledge pertaining to their work demand. The modular approach suggested here might be as follows:

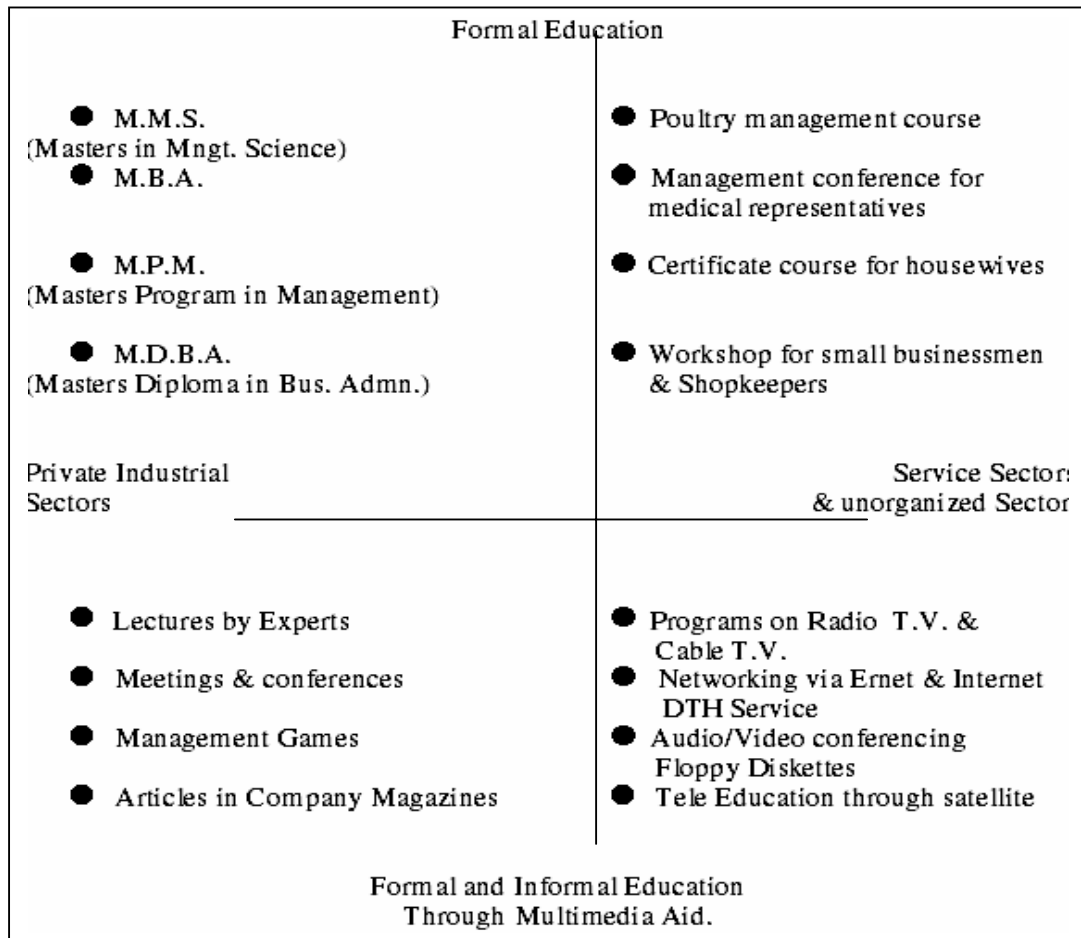
- Master degree for graduates enabling new jobs or campus recruitment.
- Master degree for in service people.
- Short duration need based courses for working managers and non-managers.

Management education therefore may cover new target groups and placement counseling. It can be very exciting and effective if distance education methodologies are applied to it creatively. The management process is so basic and helpful that it is possible to apply the same, effectively in all the areas and at all levels of organizations.

In fact, the functions, principles and concepts can be used not only in all types of business, political, social and educational organizations but even at individual level.

At present these management concepts are formally taught to very few management students. Therefore, certain measures can be, and should be taken to make these concepts known to everyone in the society. Of course, these measures are not to substitute, but supplement the present system of management education. Figure given as

under depicts the probable nature of “Management Education for All”.



Probable Nature of Management Education for All

MULTI MEDIA ADVANTAGE AND NEW DELIVERY SYSTEM

The increasing demand for management education, change in nature of business and industry within the newly created borderless market environment, and the revolution, in information technology provides an opportunity to change the curricula and delivery system of management education so as to provide prospective managers an edge to successfully face the challenge in globally competitive setting. Therefore, management education and IT has to develop a mutually supportive relationship for achieving excellence.

We in India are using multi technologies in imparting management education. At the one end, some premier institutions are having access to all facilities in term of educational technology such as multimedia system, LAN; WAN and worldwide web and on the other hand, a large number of B-Schools are still depending only on] stereotyped lecture method in imparting knowledge. Therefore, the existence of technology gap provides an opportunity to use IT supported education technologies for better delivery of education, easier access to a number of knowledge sources, sharing through networks and quality distance learning in management education.

In most of the B-School knowledge and information are delivered by utilizing conventional methods. However, in distance mode of learning modern multimedia

technologies may be beneficially used. With access to Internet, the learners have a reach to an unrestricted pool of knowledge, through the web T.V. while operating at their home. Hence the homes will come to harbor the “Virtual” classroom. With the help of broadcast T.V. the best available professionals, emeritus professors and functional specialists can interact directly to a large number of learners. In remote areas where networking is not available or may not prove cost effective CD-ROMs run on a multimedia PC are treated to be the best option of taking business education. Huge information, data, figures, pictorials, documents, graphics may be stored within them along with audio and video effect. Further internet communication is a very useful medium of imparting knowledge as class room situations may be created at home with the access to E-mail and web browsing on the world wide web, which is now commonly available due to the launch of web television.

Computers play a useful role in creating learning material. Through multimedia symbiotic advantage may be gathered by integration of various types of information such as clip part, animation graphics, music, voice, live interaction that makes the delivery effective. Digital multimedia have made T.V. interactive. It has elevated its

functionality to information delivery and education. The consumers of this information have a choice to call for information they need. A selected program can be viewed at the convenience of the viewer and not when relayed. Multimedia computer can be used for training on management education in one –to-one situation with the student. Multimedia system is treated to be more learner friendly as compared to T.V. as it enables to control the response of instruction transfer process as per the pace of the learner's grasping capacity and preference so as to purposive and situation specific interface with available information package. This creates an identical condition to the classroom on computer monitor without engaging a teacher and the given package can be browsed again and again by the learner to match with his/her own learning process. In management discipline students come with mature personality. Computer based learning provides them an opportunity for self growth rather than being taught which stimulates them as they themselves make an appraisal of their achievements in the learning process. On the other hand teachers may also concentrate themselves on development and research related activities, as they are relieved from routine and monotonous tasks such as tasking, drill, practice and sharing of information. Hence, the new systems reduces dependence on conventional and less cost effective infrastructure on elements of

learning and also avoid wastage of time to assemble in a class room.

It is now realized that multimedia technologies have some relative advantages as compared to conventional mode of information sharing. This generates the need for computer, which is not only useful in sharing knowledge but also imbibes skills required in a prospective manager such as conceptual, behavioral, analytical and administrative. In B Schools case studies, workshop, project work, business games supplements conceptual learning. To develop the ability to apply knowledge in real life and hypothetical situation different software are developed. Now –a-days most of the management literature is also published with CD ROM to provide visual effect to printed material.

ELECTRONIC LIBRARY AND NETWORKING

The impact of IT on university libraries and more so on the B-School libraries is bound to be drastic, if not detrimental. The print material is forced to beat a retreat. The libraries of future will be called electronic libraries. Instead of books, these will have optical disks, which could be used at home or anywhere through a small portable electronic reader. Computer applications to library and information field increase the efficiency of the day-to-day library work. An electronic computer network connecting

millions of computers all over the world is the Internet. It provides the path for the continuous flow of data among computers using protocol software. It is the information superhighway. Its basic applications like ftp, e-mail and remote log-in allow flow of information. Its various tools like Gopher, WWW and Archie allow for fast access to reliable data. Its various services like Usenet service, Telnet service etc. further enhances its capabilities. Internet is the fastest medium of access to information of all types at click of mouse. It is an essential element in libraries today, which is providing new dimensions to the way libraries acquire, process store and disseminate information.

Today most of the B-school libraries have access to on line information service and have acquired CD-ROMs and have mounted them on networks with wider access. The goal of better management education, however, can be served by taking a more focused approach of building internet that connects the management institutions similar to Indian institute of Management and can be utilized by member institutions only. The intranets may be used to connect B-Schools in each state or those on common

platforms. The tools necessary to share resources will include use of internet connectivity through DOT, VSNL or other ISPs, web browsers, web servers and security firewall as the heart of electronic bulletin boards and list servers for low volume discussion groups as well as for member institutions with the limited connectivity and bandwidth. Many applications can be administered on the business educational Internet such as sharing of library resources, projects and research work, faculty interaction and collaboration, student placement information and video conferencing.

To conclude with, through libraries today we have moved from documentation to information and in the next decade will move from information to knowledge.

REACHING THE DISADVANTAGED THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION

The new technology alike other areas have helped in improving distance education for management program. With advanced communication technology, teaching learning process has become faster, non-conventional and interesting. Distance education is the forerunner in exploiting the potential of information technology so as to reach the learners, teach them, while assuring also its future, especially in the third world countries like India.

Distance education acts as a social catalyst in developing countries and supports the objectivist model of knowledge transmission. Peters has observed three important features of distance education: first, the use of multimedia; second, the mass education of students at a distance; and third, the industrialization of teaching process. It is felt that distance education must adapt new technology tailored to individual learner within the Indian environment. However, the technology should be cost-effective, interactive and innovative.

During last 20 years the Open University system has shown substantial growth and development, both quantitative and qualitative. At present there are ten open universities in the country including the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Most of them are offering management education. IGNOU is fastest growing education system in the world. With over six hundred thousand students, more than fifty programs comprising over six hundred courses. It is the largest university in the country and second largest in the world. The cataclysmic changes taking place in the telecom and IT sector are being increasingly absorbed by the university and now it plans to install VSAT based terminal across the country. In an attempt to implement an

interactive ETV for distance learning program for management, the IGNOU has conducted teleconferences for: 1. Distance students 2. Counselors handling counseling sessions at study centers 3. Regional Directors and supporting staff of the university.

The interactive network system has three basic components viz.:

- The teaching end,
- The receiving end and,
- The space craft

In addition to IGNOU, some other experiments have taken place in India on educational teleconferencing such as ISRO-UGC National Talk- Back Experiment 1991, INDO-US sub commission project; classroom 2000+, 1993: CEC-ISRO-UGC-IGNOU teleconference, 1994; NOS-DECU-ISRO talk back experiment 1996. These experiments were conducted to appreciate both way interactions in distance learning.

Within this backdrop, the impact of multimedia technology is appreciable to identify the effect on distance education for management discipline, which is as follows:

- The teacher and learner of management education are not required to assemble in a classroom. There are no regular classes in peer group interaction.
- It has no time and space limitation. Learners are not required to complete the

entire course in a given time frame. the pace of learning may be decided by the student at his own. Like wise no campus infrastructure is needed.

- Digital or electronic library may reach to the learner without physical boundary.

Integrated library with online multimedia support can solve the problems of students.

- Various packages such as 'INFORLINE' for general information. 'ADVANCE' for advice to students. 'CHOICELINE' for choice of subject. 'LIBLINE' for library holdings and ' EXAMLINe' for date-sheet of term-end examination and related information may be developed for achieving excellence in management education thought distance mode. These packages can be made available to the management students at university home pages on the web site, video cassettes and CD-ROMs.

- There is a growing trend that management institutions are launching distance education program. They may use Internet by opening their web sites to reach to the students who are having access to Internet.

- Telephone counseling may be organized by arranging a counseling counter with STD facility for answering student queries. Students may be given this facility

free of charge by dialing a certain code during pre-decided counseling hours. If connected through computer they may ask immediate clarifications through the network.

- Initially for the assignments and later for the term end examinations traditional examination system may be replaced through on-line computer assessment system.

IT EDUCATION FOR PROSPECTIVE MANAGERS

With the advent of the new millennium Internet based computer hardware and software will usher in. Most of B-Schools in India are now plentifully supplied with PCs and related technologies. However, most of the machines are under utilized.

After earning degree in management, majority of the students aspire for employment in industry, commerce and service sector. Employers in these areas with that their prospective managers should not only qualify in different functional areas of management but also possess necessary knowledge regarding popular application software packages, application programming and also understanding about how the PCs may be used optimally at their placement situation.

It is suggested that initially an exposure of basic concepts of hardware and software, word processing, spreadsheets, Data base, Network and Internet is adequate.

Simultaneously, students be encouraged to solve real life problem with the help of spread and data base packages. For those who wish to make advance use of computers, knowledge of data and file structure, Unix operating system and programming methodology using computer languages C, C++, or Visual C++ and application of programming viz. in numerical analysis and computational techniques may be given.

The purpose is to enable the prospective managers to develop their knowledge of computer potentiality and skill building for better placement.

In employment market demand exists and likely to grow for those who are IT literate.

Knowledge of web technology (particularly Java application and E-Commerce) and programming in COBOL will be other desirable and attractive qualifications.

There exist a common feeling among different stakeholders that IT literacy of management students may provide four benefits:

- The technologies that are learnt can be applied directly to useful ends.
- The skills, which are sharpened, may increase analytical abilities, insight and creativity enhances problem-solving capacity of the students.

- Managers who are computer literate will feel at ease in the new millennium of innovation, vision and cybernetics.
- Lucrative placement opportunities for the IT educated managers.

CONCLUSION

In developing societies like India the problem is not poverty, low production, low level of per capita income or GNP. The real problem is that we are not adequately and professionally managed. Most of our industrial and service sector units are either under-managed or unmanaged. Therefore, what we need is managerialisation of all the institutions in our eco-socio system. This requires a large number of professionally qualified managers. In India there is a need of management education for all. The growing demand of managers in various segments of economy may not be met with campus centric management education. Through open and distance mode of learning equipped with advent of modern information technology we may develop a cadre of qualified managers who may accept the challenge to solve most of grave problem of the country.

With the liberalization, privatization, and globalization (LPG) of economy, we are in the transformation process from being a technically backward country towards being at par

with rest of the world in the 21st century. The transition phase has thrown up many challenge and opportunities which need to be exploited and managed to restructure the education system in general and management education in specific for a bright future. The strengths of IT advancement can be harnessed for reframing the management education so as to reach to unreached in an effective manner.

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