



INNOVATIONS IN STUDENT CENTRIC LEARNING – A STUDY OF TOP BUSINESS SCHOOLS IN INDIA

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Abstract:

Based on opening up the higher education system to Private sectors in India, the competition between institutions for quality education became primary issue of discussion to attract more students to their courses. Innovation in Student centric learning is one of the basic requirements to attract interested students to the institution. In this context, the institutions of higher education in India are in need of infusion of quality and clarity on the approach of building world-class educational institutions. In this paper, we have discussed how co-curricular and extra-curricular innovations helped higher education top business schools in India by identifying the innovations made by top business schools in their admission process, course design, course delivery, course schedule, course pedagogy, and examination system. The study is based on collecting the information from top ten old Business schools of IIM category announced by NIRF, MHRD, for the year 2013-15 and some top private business schools. The effectiveness of these innovations are analysed and compared using a self-designed curriculum analysis framework.

Index Terms: Student Centric Curriculum, Student Centric Learning & Innovations in Higher Education Teaching

1. Introduction:

Business management education is becoming more attractive, competitive and costly due to the fact that many business management graduates are getting better opportunity in industries. This is due to the reason that business management institutions are becoming successful in enhancing confidence, innovativeness, competitiveness and smartness of management graduates along with enhanced knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to the industries effectively. By developing student centric curriculum and innovative pedagogy, business schools are trying continuously the decision making ability of the students so that they can substantially contribute to the objectives of the organizations they serve. Presently, in India there are 3 tier system involved in imparting business management education. First tier institutions are autonomous business schools operating both in public sectors (like IIM's) and operating in private sector with complete autonomy for innovations in student centric curriculum design, The second tier institutions are University business management departments of both Public and Private universities which have autonomy but no interest in innovation and to provide student centric curriculum. The third tier institutions are affiliated colleges imparting higher education in business management with no autonomy to make innovation and ability to provide student centric curriculum. Apart from the student centric curriculum, business schools are also focusing on providing more specialisations/electives in the second half of the course and also focusing on adding industrial requirement components in their curriculum. Most of the business schools also focus on arranging lucrative salaried campus placement to add brand and attract more students at high fees. In order to improve the quality of students and to enhance their skills, top level business schools tries to add values to their curriculum and make it student centric. In this paper, we have studied some of old top ranked business schools under two categories as Indian Institute of Managements and

Private business schools for their innovations in both curriculum and pedagogy for student centric learning methodology.

2. Student Centric Learning:

Some of the student centric learning features are:

- ✓ Flexibility in choice of subjects in a course.
- ✓ Flexibility in Time of completion of semesters and course.
- ✓ Flexibility in choosing elective subjects.
- ✓ Flexibility in evaluation system as student friendly.
- ✓ Flexibility in examination system.
- ✓ Opportunity to take more credit papers than minimum requirement.
- ✓ Earn while learn flexibility.
- ✓ Opportunity in research based learning.
- ✓ Opportunity in innovation Based learning.
- ✓ Opportunity in choosing Choice based credit system or Competency based Credit system in the college.
- ✓ Provision of independent studies based on self developed curriculum.
- ✓ Experimental and experiential learning opportunity.
- ✓ Effective pedagogy in classroom based learning.
- ✓ Online Video based learning & Evaluation.
- ✓ Action based learning for better understanding.
- ✓ Innovations in student placements.

3. Study of Innovations in Student Centric Learning in India:

Indian universities and business schools are trying to improve the quality of their courses by adding innovations in admission process, curriculum, pedagogy, student centric teaching – learning process, examination & evaluation system, and arranging attractive placements. In this paper, we have developed a curriculum analysis framework to study the innovations adopted in Indian universities and business schools to know how they are student centric?

The Curriculum analysis framework consists of following parameters:

- ✓ Number of Core Subjects.
- ✓ Number of Electives.
- ✓ Number of industry Projects (individual & team).
- ✓ Number of Case studies Analysis.
- ✓ Number of Case studies Development & Presentation.
- ✓ Number of Research projects.
- ✓ Number of articles published in Institutional magazine.
- ✓ Amount of practical component in the curriculum.
- ✓ Self developed curriculum of a student.
- ✓ Personalized Curriculum opportunity.
- ✓ Simultaneous Dual Degree Opportunity.
- ✓ Self-directed Global Projects.
- ✓ Student Exchange Programmes.
- ✓ Non-credit Paper on Job Searching Skills.
- ✓ Opportunity to Journal Publication.
- ✓ Opportunity to work in E-Labs.
- ✓ Innovation in examination system etc.

4. Top Business School in India: To study the innovations added to pedagogy by top Indian schools, we have listed the top business schools in India based on recent institutional Ranking System announced by HRD ministry of India as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Pedagogical details of Top Ten Business Schools in India as per NIRF, HRD Ministry, Government of India

S. No.	Institution	Major Programme	Number of Core & Elective Subjects	Pedagogy
1	Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore	PGP	Core = 45% Electives = 55% Internship = 8 weeks	Lectures, classroom discussions, case studies, individual and group projects, term papers, role plays, student projects, dissertations, business games and films.
2	Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad	PGP	Core = 55% Electives = 45% Internship = 8 weeks	Case Method supplemented with guest lectures, seminars, games, role plays, industrial visits, projects and group exercises.
3	Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata	PGP	Core = 50% Electives = 50% Internship = 8 weeks	Case studies, lectures, group and individual exercises, class projects, student presentations, simulation games etc.,
4	Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow	PGP	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% Internship = 8 weeks	Lectures, case discussions, exercises, seminars, role plays, management games, assignments, term papers, project work, audio-visual aids, and computer-based learning methods.
5	Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur	PGP	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% Internship = 8 weeks	Case studies, group and individual projects, student presentations, simulation games, etc.
6	Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode	PGP	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% Internship = 8-10 weeks	Lecture, Case study & Simulations based discussions and Audio visual tools.
7	International Management Institute, New Delhi	PGDM	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% Internship = 8-10 weeks	Lectures, case discussions, presentations, assignments and project work.

8	Indian Institute of Forest management, Bhopal	PGDFM	Core = 65 % Electives = 35% Internship = 10 weeks Field work = 5 weeks	Classroom teaching, Fieldwork, projects, presentations, simulations etc.
9	Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur	MBA	Core = 65 % Electives = 35% Internship = 10 weeks	Lecture, Seminars, internship project, Capstone Project etc.
10	Indian Institute of Management, Indore	PGP	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% Internship = 8 weeks	Business cases, projects, computer aided instructions, group discussions, lectures, seminars, presentations by participants and lectures

Table 2: Pedagogical details of some private Top Business Schools in India

S. No	Business School	P.G. Courses	No. of Core & Elective subjects	Pedagogy
1	Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad	PGP, Ex-PGP,	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% 10 days ELP Projects	Online Preparatory Courses, Pre-course reading materials, Speaker series or visits, Simulations, Innovative modes of assessment, Case studies, Live Cases and Action learning, Coaching and assessments, Experiential learning, Guest lectures, International Immersion etc.
2	IMT, Ghaziabad	PGP, Ex-PGP, PGDBA	2 month internship	Teaching pedagogy consists combination of case studies, seminars, simulations and group projects.
3	T.A. Pai Management Institute(TAPMI, Manipal	PGP, Ex-PGP,	Core = 55 % Electives = 45% Internship = 8 weeks	Lectures, Case Studies, Role Plays, Project Presentations, and Simulations, are used. Emphasis on self learning, group work and team building.

				Joint faculty - student projects. Courses of independent study
4	Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai	PGP, Ex-PGP, F= 35	Core = 60 % Electives = 40% 10 weeks Summer Internship	Empirical study under Great Lakes Research Centre, Rigorous 12 week summer internship. Dynamic and creative learning through effort to make all courses as practical.
5	SDM IMD, Mysore	PGP, Ex-PGP,	Core = 50 % Electives = 50% 8-10 weeks project work. 2 credit socially relevant project.	Cases in Management and Entrepreneurship, Lectures, Individual, Group assignments and Role plays, Project exercise.

5. Strategy of Top Business Schools in Innovations in Student Centric Learning:

We have also identified the strategies these top ten business schools are offering in the process of providing value based student centric learning. Such student centric learning strategies are listed in last column of Table 1 & 2.

(1) IIM, Bangalore: IIMB benchmarks its curriculum against the best in the world to ensure that it delivers world-class business education, based on the best pedagogic practices, while focussing on the Indian context. The course content and design is inspired by management practice rather than ivory-tower academics, with a strong orientation towards current and emerging management issues. The curriculum is modified every year and rehailed completely every three years to stay in tune with the current business environment. IIMB's curricula, innovative teaching methods, exposure to industry best practices and experiential learning emphasize the distinctive challenges of managing in emerging economies. IIMB provides a real experience of learning in a vibrant emerging economy. Clubs, social projects and student self-governance initiatives help build leadership skills [7].

(2) IIM, Ahmedabad: The PG programme at IIM-A offers four types of courses spread across two years viz. Foundational, tools and techniques oriented, functional and perspective-building courses. It also provides opportunities for project courses and courses of independent study during the second year. At the end of first year students undertake summer training with Institute's corporate partners for a period of eight to nine weeks. The Summer Internship is a powerful source of practical managerial insights, validation of management concepts, and valuable market knowledge. The programme attempts to equip students with the required conceptual and interpersonal skills and sense of social purpose for managerial decision-making, develop leadership capabilities to act as change agents and be a source of motivation in the organizations they work in, nurture the desire to excel in performance without compromising integrity, honesty and fairness. The cornerstone of the pedagogy used are case discussions and Group work. In case method of learning, case discussions are supplemented with guest lectures, seminars, games, role plays, industrial visits and group exercises. The case method is used to develop problem solving and decision making skills by facilitating the application of theoretical concepts to real-life situations.

Group work is another major component of most courses. The groups are formed in a manner such that students get to work with people from different educational, professional and cultural backgrounds. Feedback from alumni has confirmed that the greater part of one's learning at the Institute happens in group activities that range from preparing for case presentations to working on live industry projects [8].

(3) IIM, Kolkata: The PG programme at IIM-Kolkata has a two-tier structure with core curriculum (compulsory credit courses and compulsory non-credit courses), a summer internship (compulsory industry training between first and second year) and elective courses (optional courses in the second year). The first year is committed to developing business fundamentals through compulsory courses spanning the areas of economics, finance, marketing, operations, systems and behavioural sciences. The second year offers more number of electives than any other B-School in India, the flexibility ensuring that a student never makes a compromise with his desired area of pursuit. Students aspiring to delve deeper into topics can undertake term papers under faculty supervision. The method of instruction varies. Case studies, lectures, group and individual exercises, class projects, student presentations, simulation games etc., are used in different courses. The courses bring in industry experts to integrate classroom learning with industry practice. The Institute has made significant progress in forging stable student exchange partnerships with more than forty Universities / Institutions across different continents. It also provides dual degree programme with foreign Universities / Institutions to bring in more cultural diversity in the flagship PG programme and also give students opportunities to acquire cross cultural experiences by spending longer time in select partner schools [9].

(4) IIM, Indore: PGP Programme at IIM Indore will enable students to understand relevance of context in business, develop social consciousness, develop critical thinking skills, inculcate integrative thinking ability, Promote interpersonal awareness and ability to work in groups, enable students to learn how to apply the basic principles of communication in order to write effective business messages, case analysis and reports, develop competence in quantitative analysis, and prepare business leaders with a sound understanding of ethics. Apart from designed curriculum for two years, the students get additional training on Communication, Leadership, Spreadsheet Modeling, Entrepreneurial Orientation, Innovation and Design Thinking and Sustainability, which are taught in a workshop-based format. The special feature include : Unique rural immersion programme to give graduates contextual connect, Experiential learning, unique matrix based structure wherein participants take 10% credits in 'Industry Vertical Courses' and 10% credits in 'Functional Area Courses' in addition to the general management credits in one term, Himalaya outbound programme where participants are adequately prepared for a corporate career, their ability to motivate themselves to perform in an unfamiliar ambience and work as a team is enhanced by encouraging them to undergo an outbound exercise and simulation conducted in serene locations at various altitudes in the Himalayas, and Strong Student Exchange Programme. The pedagogy include combination of various teaching methods such as cases, projects, computer aided instructions, group discussions, lectures, seminars, presentations by participants and lectures by guest speakers from industry and government. The case method is the predominant pedagogical tool. This sharpens the analytical skills of participants and helps analyze problems from multi- functional perspectives. Instructors mainly guide the group, push participants to develop and defend arguments and take decisions [10].

(5) IIM, Lucknow: IIM Lucknow follows a case-based teaching methodology. By giving students a glimpse of situations faced in the real world, the institution helps them find patterns in what initially looks random. Fully enabled lecture theatres, with state-of-the-art audio-visual tools help the students present all aspects of a study. Regular presentations help them to become both knowledgeable individuals and persuasive speakers. The special features of IIM, Lucknow are : The programme is designed as an integrated whole to generate maximum synergy among its components, The emphasis is on internalization of knowledge rather than mere acquisition, The emphasis is on internalization of knowledge rather than mere acquisition, Sensitization and capacity to deal with environmental influences are stressed, both as a means of enhancing organisational well-being as well as promoting good corporate and professional citizenship A high degree of training with the use of emerging managerial tools and technologies is imparted to the students, The programme aims at generating among the students the capability of 'learning to learn' in recognition of the importance of continued learning for a successful managerial career, The programme endeavours to nurture a social system which is conducive for inculcating the value system appropriate for a professional manager in the Indian context. The basket of teaching methods employed includes lectures, case discussions, exercises, seminars, role plays, management games, assignments, term papers, project work, audio-visual aids, and computer-based learning methods. The institute has set up an incubation centre which experiential, team based and collaborative learning opportunities, providing a platform to the students to transform their concepts and ideas into physical prototypes [11].

(6) ISB, Hyderabad: It encourages the students to work with the industry on real-world business issues. This gives students a chance to apply their learning outside a classroom setting and gain new perspectives on business and major global issues. Experimental learning at ISB provides students to work directly with companies in real-time and gain additional hands-on experience. Exposure to cutting edge management research and theory further gives the students a more relevant perspective to real-world business issues. Students are required to prepare a consulting proposal for the client (scope of work, timeline etc.), make the necessary primary/secondary research and prepare a final report and present findings with recommendations to the client. Many companies also use this programme as their pre-recruitment exercise. As per ISB, since 2004, the students have engaged with over 450 companies across a wide range of industries and successfully completed close to 800+ assignments [12].

(7) TAPMI, Manipal: Emphasizes student centric learning through the case method of teaching. Over two years, students need to analyze numerous cases, and engage in several course-based term projects, develop business plans and make presentations. TAPMI's program is known for the rigor of its assessment processes – assessment events include short quizzes, class presentations, class participation and discussion, project reports and long examinations. State-of-the-art information and communication technology is extensively used for delivery as well as evaluation. The highlights of the programme are: Emphasis on self learning, Focus on a Holistic approach to decision making and problem solving, Integrated approach to the functional areas of Management, Strong emphasis on ethics and values, Emphasis on group work and team building, Academic rigor and continuous evaluation, Personality development through specially designed modules, Strong support through faculty advisors, and counsellors, Joint faculty - student projects, Active collaboration between the institute and industry through features like summer placement and management in practice, Opportunities for

the students to delve deeper into chosen areas of interest, through tailor-made courses of independent study [13].

(8) IMT, Ghaziabad: This institution provides experimental learning opportunity to its students with an opportunity to gain more of it through extensive exposure via different student led Clubs and initiatives to bring out the leader in them and uncover their true potential. Teaching methods comprise of a combination of case studies, seminars, simulations and group projects. These along with other training tools optimize learning and management skills Flexibility in choosing electives across streams irrespective of chosen PGDM specialization maximizes student satisfaction. You learn subjects that interest you, often excelling in subjects beyond your specialization. IMT Ghaziabad's campus is close to the Delhi NCR region, giving you the added advantage of extensive and regular interaction with industry leaders. The objective is to prepare you for careers in specific fields and management leadership in general. The two months internship programme provides you with an opportunity to explore your areas of interest [14].

(9) Great Lakes, Chennai: Empirical study model is a fully mentored 6 credit, 3 term rigorous academic activity involving the identification of a core business problem and ways and means of solving the same. The problem selected pertains to the chosen horizontal function and vertical domain specialization of the student. Some of the salient features of the empirical study are: Runs through the first year of the program, requires 120 hours of out-of-class academic input, done individually or in groups of two or three students, fully mentored by a faculty as well as by an industry mentor, and the outcome of the study is a paper co-authored by the student with the guide [15].

(10) SDMIND, Mysore: At SDM IMD, all the first year students are required to undertake a project titled Socially Relevant Project (SRP) in the third term. This course is a compulsory TWO CREDIT requirement for completion of PGDM program with the objectives to: Sensitize students to Social Issues, Instil and develop ethics, social responsibility and philanthropy – values which the SDM Trust is reputed for expose students to non- corporate organizations, government departments, NGOs to help them understand the application of management concepts and principles to social issues, and to serve like a curtain raiser to students who might consider Social Entrepreneurship as a career option. The 8-10 week industry project gives an opportunity to work and gain first-hand exposure to the environment, work culture and processes that prevail in real-life organizations. Based on the learning of the first three terms of the program, the student is equipped with the conceptual skills, but lacks the experience of putting this learning into practice. SIP provides the intern an opportunity of learning and decision-making [16].

6. Conclusion:

In this paper, we have discussed how co-curricular and extra-curricular innovations helped higher education top business schools in India by identifying the innovations made by top business schools in their admission process, course design, course delivery, course schedule, course pedagogy, and examination system. The study is based on collecting the information from top 10 Business schools announced by NIRF, MHRD, for the year 2013-15. The effectiveness of these innovations are analysed and compared using a self-designed curriculum analysis framework.

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