

Chapter 16

Structural and Functional Pre– Requisites of Management Admission Process: An Analysis of Aspirant Networks in India

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ABSTRACT

In the last 25 years, along with the opening up of the economy and growth of the industry, there has been an exponential growth of both private and public business schools. Public business schools have also started expanding giving a tough competition to private business schools. There is competition in both the supply (B-schools) and demand side (MBA aspirants) to match the aspirants' needs and get them a rational return on their investment (RoI) through this tool called management degree. To understand the strategy of MBA admission in business schools, it is pertinent to understand the networks of MBA colleges and the created networks of aspirants. This chapter is an attempt to understand the admission strategy of classified business management institutions in the socio-structural context of aspirants. For the classification of management institutions, the author has considered NHRDN ranking of 2018. The chapter also explores the MBA admission strategies of these top business schools in the context of their institutional branding and student networks effects.

INTRODUCTION

Management in Business Administration *aka* MBA, is a buzzword in India, lasting over more than twenty-five years, imprinting its impression as the quintessential element in the segment of higher education in the country. Amongst the plethora of reasons of its popularity as a “wanna be” course/degree, one pertinent cause is the liberalization of the Indian economy, which not only gave rise to the incessant requirement of business managers in the league but also contributed to the large-scale privatization of higher education in the country. This, in turn, facilitated management education to gain up-surging

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galore while creating a unique space for higher education aspirants in India. Alongside the exponential growth of private business school in almost every alley of the country, what is striking is even the public business schools are off late giving good competitions to those in the private league representing a space in the creamy layers of the ranking. Interestingly, this competition is not only in terms of the quality of business education that the schools provide but also the currency of both the supply (Business Schools) and demand side (MBA aspirants) to match the aspirants' needs and get them a rational return on their investment (RoI) through this tool called management degree. Hence comes into play the much awaited and talked as well as thought through the extensive process of admission in these schools. The chapter with a clear intent to understand and decode the strategy of MBA admission in business schools has taken to the route of first attempting to untangle the otherwise perceived complicated networks of the MBA colleges as well as that of aspirants.

It is well known that there is a prominently defined hierarchy amongst the management institutes in India, and in order to understand aspirants' networks for enrollment and brand awareness purpose, it is ideal to get abreast with this ladder and their admission strategy in the socio-structural context of aspirants. For the purpose, we have considered national HRD networks (NHRDN) ranking of 2018 (HT, March 14, 2018) to classify the business management institutions. The ranking includes both public and private business schools but for the purpose of the study, we have zeroed down on top 20 business schools, which are being further divided into four clusters i.e. top 5 government business schools, top 5 private business schools, bottom 5 government business schools and bottom 5 business schools (Annexure I). The present chapter would explore the MBA admission strategies of this four cluster of business schools in the context of their institutional branding and student networks effects. Further, the socio-structural effects of student networks would be determined by taking into account different online discussion forums like pagalguy.com and mbauniverse.com. As the method of data analysis, Content Analysis would be largely used for the purpose of detailed analysis of admission discussions of four colleges (one from each cluster).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tracing back, it is indubitable that management education has been ingrained in our civilization since time immemorial. From the mythological literature like Bhagwad Geeta in which the teachings essentially envelopes lucid description of managerial techniques to let us rise above any sorts of conflicts, to the existing remains of Mohanjodaro and Harrapa civilizations, it is evident that our lifestyle had always sorted itself in terms of management and administration.

Coming to the history of the formal management education in the country, procrastinating the demand and need for grooming the Indians on management front, India was house to nine management education institute by 1958. The Indian Institute(s) of Management (IIMs) was established in the early 60 decades in Calcutta (Now, Kolkata) and Ahmedabad, respectively. With the then Department of Commerce in universities revisiting their curriculum to accommodate management education, it is interesting to note that by 1990, India had around eighty-two university-based management departments and the list also included some prominent names like the University of Delhi and Punjab, which established separate Faculty of Management (Sinha, 2004).

Post the 90's when liberalization and globalization opened gates for private companies and multi-national companies (MNCs), the competition in the market grew manifolds. The competition not only

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