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## Innovative Practices in Management Education in India

Sushant Kumar Mishra, Gopal Prasad Mahapatra,  
and Chirag Dagar

### Introduction

Management as an educational field gained significance during the years marked by the industrial revolution, mercantilism, and market reforms. It gained momentum with a promise to contribute to business management. Borrowing from different disciplines, such as psychology,

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S. K. Mishra · G. P. Mahapatra

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India  
e-mail: [sushantam@iimb.ac.in](mailto:sushantam@iimb.ac.in)

G. P. Mahapatra

e-mail: [gopal.mahapatra@iimb.ac.in](mailto:gopal.mahapatra@iimb.ac.in)

C. Dagar (✉)

Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management, Indian Institute of Technology  
Bombay, Mumbai, India

e-mail: [chirag.dagar@som.iitb.ac.in](mailto:chirag.dagar@som.iitb.ac.in)

sociology, accounting, economics, and law, the scholarship of management expanded. Subsequently, the management literature contributed to managers' training, future managers' development through education, and the expansion of research in management scholarship. The evolution and expansion of markets popularized management education among the youth.

In modern times, the Emlyon Business School in Lyon, France, was probably the first business school established by the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1872. In 1881, the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania, USA, was established by Joseph Wharton, an American entrepreneur and industrialist. The other business schools that were established during this time were Booth School of Business in 1898 (Chicago University), Harvard Business School in 1908 (Harvard University), and Kellogg School of Management in 1908 (North-western University). Many other universities in different continents joined the bandwagon of management education by starting their business schools. For instance, the London Business School (Federal University of London) was established in 1964, and the NUS Business School of Business (National University of Singapore) was established in 1965 (Jha & Kumar, 2012). Some stand-alone business schools like INSEAD (France) were established in 1957.

In India, the first management school offering management education, i.e., the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management started in 1954. It was followed by four universities: Andhra, Bombay, Delhi, and Madras, offering similar management programs (Philip, 1992). Since then, management education in India has come a long way. With the setting up of Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and to respond to the rising demand for managers, many universities started offering management courses thereafter. Post-liberalization of the economy in 1991, the private sector, including some of the corporate houses, entered the management education space. Consequently, private B-schools in the country offering Post-Graduate Diploma in Management have flourished (Jha & Kumar, 2012).

The relevance of management education is reflected in its ever-growing popularity globally. Management education, specifically the MBA, is a popular discourse and business qualification in the world.

It is recognized as a form of qualification for a career in management nearly by all the countries in the world. There are 800 business schools in the USA and Europe alone, and over 100,000 MBA graduates each year (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003). A similar trend is visible in India as well. Management education has been the most coveted and desired professional qualification among the youth pursuing higher education in India. The IIMs are known to attract some of the brightest students of the country. As a result, management education has stood the test of time and attained significance in the institutional scenario of higher education in the country and beyond. The rising number of management institutes offering a variety of programs reflects the demand that management education generates. Put differently, in India, management education represents an assured path to realize one's personal aspirations, professional success, and societal recognition (Babu & Thakur, 2017).

Despite the popularity and relevance, management education has been criticized on various grounds, including fragmentation of subject matters (Porter & McKibbin, 1988), overemphasis on analysis at the cost of skill development related to managing and leading, the relevance of MBA knowledge to professional application (Pfeffer & Fong, 2004), and broader considerations (Ghoshal, 2005) to name a few. As a consequence, a call for holistic learning integrating experiential pedagogies in the management education domain has been made. In response, various approaches and practices such as role-plays, large group exercises, simulations, case studies, and reflection have been incorporated in management courses (Kisfalvi & Oliver, 2015; Waddock & Lozano, 2013). The experiential learning approach considers "transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38) as the basis of learning wherein the learner is actively involved in the learning process. Business schools in India have also endeavored to develop and update the curriculum enabling the students to effectively apply management knowledge absorbed in the classroom. By designing courses and incorporating specific initiatives and practices in the curriculum, some of the business schools in India have tried to implement experiential learning, thereby keeping pace with the changing business environment, industry needs, and contributing towards achieving bigger objectives.

This chapter presents an overview of the innovative pedagogies adopted by a few leading management schools in India, which touch upon the 'Being' and 'Doing' aspects in management education. First, it briefly discusses the evolution of management education in India, specialized management education, and private sector participation in management education. Second, it delineates the new approach to management education, emphasizing experiential learning and the aspects of knowing, doing, and being. Third, the chapter elaborates on the specific pedagogical initiatives employed by Indian business schools classified under four levels (individual, department, institute, and collective).

## Management Education in India

In India, management education evolved from the discipline of Commerce. The first School of Commerce, the Commercial School of Pachaiyappas' Charities, was established in Chennai (then Madras) in 1886. In 1903, the British Government began Commerce classes focusing on accounting, secretarial practices, and business communication at the Presidency College (Calcutta). Other notable colleges set up before India's independence were the Sydenham College (Mumbai) in 1913 and the Commercial College, later renamed as Shri Ram College of Commerce (New Delhi) in 1920. These colleges introduced business education in modern India (Gupta et al., 2003).

Post-independence, the Government of India attempted to enhance vocational skills and management education's social status (Gupta et al., 2003). The Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management was established in 1953 and is officially regarded as India's first Management Institute. Subsequently, four universities, namely the Andhra, Bombay, Madras, and Delhi University, formed departments for management studies (Saha, 2012). During the same time, the individuals in the Indian industry also initiated activities toward management education. Sir Jahangir Ghandy of TISCO (Tata Iron and Steel Co.) formed the Board of Management Studies in 1955. The task of the Board was

“evolving courses of study in management, advising All India Technical Council on the selection of suitable institutions to offer courses in management, laying down standards of the conduct of examinations leading to the award of National Diplomas and Certificates in management, and generally promoting coordinated development of management education in the country” (Philip, 1992, p. 20).

In the early 1960s, two prominent institutions were established by the Government of India. Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) at Calcutta in 1961 (West Bengal) and IIM Ahmedabad in 1961 (Gujarat). These institutes were established with the grant obtained from the Ford Foundation. IIM Calcutta was established in collaboration with the MIT Sloan School of Management and IIM Ahmedabad in collaboration with Harvard Business School (Philip, 1992). The Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) at Hyderabad was established in 1958 on the Administrative Staff College lines at Henley-on-Thames, UK (Kumar, 2019). ASCI provided training to mid-career managers. The third Indian Institute of Management was established in Bangalore (Karnataka) in 1973. The institute was founded with a public sector orientation (Shukla, 2013). During the early globalization period (2001–2010), IIM Bangalore shifted its focus and began general management courses. Subsequently, the fourth IIM was established at Lucknow in 1984, followed by IIM Kozhikode and IIM Indore in 1996.

In the 1970s, the technical institutions started offering management programs. A majority of these institutions entered the field of management education by setting up departments. Some notable departments are the Industrial and Management Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur (in 1974). In 1976, IIT Delhi established the School of System and Management Studies (Mahajan, 2015). Other notable institutions are the Vinod Gupta School of Management (IIT Kharagpur: 1993), the Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management, IIT Bombay (established in 1995, renamed in 2000), and the Department of Management Studies at IIT Roorkee, IIT Madras (in 2001), which were set up.

## Specialized Management Education

While the establishment of IIMs and other management departments at various universities gave a boom to management education in India, there was a cleavage between the management graduation and the needs of particular sectors (Sriram, 2007). In an attempt to address the sectoral problems, several institutes were established. In 1928, the Indian Institute of Banking and Finance, modeled after the London Institute of Banking and Finance, was established. The Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work (later renamed as Tata Institute of Social Sciences) was established for professional training in social work in 1936. Similarly, for the rural sector, the Institute of Rural Management [IRMA] was set up in 1979 under the leadership of Dr. Verghese Kurien, the then Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board (Sriram, 2007). National Institute of Industrial Engineering was created by the Government of India in 1963 to offer programs in management exclusively for engineers (Mahajan, 2015). The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade was set up in 1963 by India's Government as an autonomous organization to professionalize foreign trade. The National Institute of Bank Management, Pune, was established in 1968 to serve the banking industry (Ganesh, 1980). The Indian Institute of Forest Management was set up in 1982 in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) to provide specialized management education for India's entire forestry system.

## Private Institutions of Management Education

While post-independence, the Government of India established institutions to impart management education in India, several private institutions were also established in the country to provide more opportunities for the same. Jesuits (the Society of Jesus) contributed to management education by establishing the Xavier Labour Relations Institute in 1949 in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, India. Many other prominent Jesuit institutes that offered management education include Loyola, Xavier Institute of Management Bhubaneswar, and Goa Institute of Management. The

Management Development Institute (MDI), a private business school, was also established in 1973 by the Industrial Finance Corporation of India in Gurgaon. In 1981, the International Management Institute was established, the first corporate-sponsored business school by the RP Goenka Group (RPG). With the opening of the economy and the liberalization of the education system, since 2000, many private institutes have flourished in India. In 2001, the Indian School of Business was established in Hyderabad in collaboration with the Wharton School, Kellogg, and the London Business School. Many prominent institutions such as the Symbiosis Institute of Business Management Pune, the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Institute of Management Technology Ghaziabad, S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research, and the ICFAI Business School expanded management education in India. During this time, the 14 new IIMs were established by the Government of India. By the year 2016, there were more than 5,500 business schools in India.<sup>1</sup> According to a report by ASSOCHAM, only 20 percent of students get the job offer.<sup>2</sup> While lower-ranking schools lack quality, the high-ranking schools are striving to enhance their quality and global rankings. One aspect is the content delivery in management education.

## **New Approach to Management Education**

The objective of educationists and educational administrators for centuries is to make education holistic and orient it towards the overall development of the participants. While management education started with scientific management, increasing efforts are noticed in making it stakeholder centric and effective. With the increasing popularity of management education in various continents, the attention to make it more impactful has grown too. In this regard, scholars have highlighted the problems associated with the MBA programs. In a critical study,

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed from <https://www.assochem.org/newsdetail.php?id=5651.%20> on August 18, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Accessed from <https://www.assochem.org/newsdetail.php?id=6637> on October 15, 2020.

Boyatzis et al. (2002, p. 150) emphasized that “a major challenge to MBA education is to develop the ability to use management knowledge.”

Further, they argued that “cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies can be developed in MBA students, but not with a typical MBA curriculum.” The other concerns about the MBA programs are the dearth of practical experiences (Salas et al., 2009), skills (Bennis & O’Toole, 2005), values, and practices (Ghoshal, 2005). MBA programs are referred to as “silos” that lacks sufficient integrative elements (Navarro, 2008), raising doubts on the legitimacy of business schools (Alajoutsijärvi et al., 2015). For example, we found that the curricula followed in the top 10 business schools in India are the ‘silo’ approach to management education (separate areas such as finance, marketing, and human resource), with emphasis on the knowing aspect of education.

While some scholars have provided critics of management education (Vaara & Fay, 2011), others have attempted to find out ways to improve the learning of the participants in the MBA program. For example, the use of technology, simulation-based learning (Salas et al., 2009), problem-based learning (Ungaretti et al., 2015), and integrative live cases (Venkat et al., 2019) are some of the initiatives used in academia. Besides, to make an impact, management education scholars have explored the practical aspects of management education. For example, scholars from Chicago Booth (Davis & Hogarth, 2013)<sup>3</sup> proposed three essential determinants of effective management education: conceptual knowledge, domain knowledge, and action skills. Similarly, scholars from Harvard Business School (Datar et al., 2010) identified three aspects of management education, namely the knowing, being, and doing.

‘Knowing’ refers to the cognitive aspects of management (i.e., what does one know or need to know about management and particularly business management like marketing, finance, operations management, and so on and the situations in which managers have to work which are covered in the courses like business environment, economics, etc.). ‘Being’ is the next aspect of management education, which is based on the premise that it is who you are affecting your ability to manage. The

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<sup>3</sup> <https://research.chicagobooth.edu/harrydavis/about-the-davis-center/about-harry-davis>, accessed on November 4, 2019.



underlying values, assumptions, and beliefs about the world and the way of its functioning can shape our approach to management. Martin and Mirraoopa (2003) posited that individual's ways of being is context-dependent. According to them "We are part of the world as much as it is part of us, existing within a network of indigenous people ways of being mean relations amongst Entities that are reciprocal and occur in certain contexts. This determines and defines for us rights to be earned and bestowed as we carry out rites to country, self and others — our Ways of Being" (Martin & Mirraoopa, 2003, p. 209).

The 'Doing' aspect is about how management is practiced, applying the functional and integrative knowledge, using technology, building relationships, and networking. With an increasing focus on experiential learning and holistic education, scholars have focused on reflective learning. For example, Kolb's four learning styles, namely the opportunity for concrete experience, reflective observations, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation, are used in the Multidisciplinary Action Projects at the Ross School of Business (see Datar et al., 2010). Peltier et al. (2006) presented "a global model of reflective learning" to engage the participants in higher levels of learning. In a similar tone, Berdrow and Evers (2010) highlighted the importance of developing "reflective practitioners" in modern organizations. Also, in a comprehensive study, Boyatzis and Saatchioglu (2008, p. 105) stressed that a "more holistic approach (i.e., developing knowledge, competencies, and values) could help dramatically improve our impact and the relevance of an MBA to their future work organizations." In this chapter, we have provided an overview on the innovative practices the management schools in India are incorporating to facilitate experiential learning in their curricula.

Management education in general, and specifically in India, over the decades appears to have been more focused on 'knowing' aspects. Knowing aspect has been criticized as it does not prepare the participants "to 'do' innovative thinking in the workplace" (Datar et al., 2010, p. 8). However, there are many institutions (at the individual level, area/department level, and institution level) trying to bring the 'being'

aspect to the curriculum. In the following sections, we describe interesting practices followed by the educators in the management institutions to nurture 'being' aspects in regular management programs or executive programs in management. While scholars have focused on the concept of experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), many institutions are practicing experiential learning (being and doing).

## **Innovative Pedagogies in Indian Business Schools: Classification and Description**

We have classified the innovative pedagogies into four levels, namely individual faculty level (Level 1), department/Area level (Level 2), institution level (Level 3), and collective level, i.e., more than one institution (Level 4). In the following section, we elaborate on the pedagogy followed in Indian business schools. In addition to published papers, we collected information from websites of selected business schools, talking to officials of concerned institutions, reports, and newspapers. For this analysis, we interviewed faculty who have designed the respective courses, faculty coordinators, program directors, and student participants to obtain insights about the details of the courses, the conduct and components, assessments involved, and overall experience in offering and participating in the courses.

### **Level 1: Individual Faculty Level**

#### **Sociology of Bazaar<sup>4</sup> at Amrut Mody School of Management (AMSM), Ahmedabad**

The Amrut Mody School of Management (AMSM) is located in Ahmedabad, in the Gujarat state of India. Ahmedabad is blessed with many business communities such as the Jains, Marwaris, Sindhis, Chelias,

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<sup>4</sup> The authors are grateful to Prof. Abrar Ali Saiyed for providing the inputs. Prof. Abrar has designed and the course is in demand for several years now. Prof. Abrar is a faculty in the Entrepreneurship and Family Business Area at Ahmedabad University, Gujarat.

Bohras, Khojas, Parsis, Purohits, and Memons. This course helps the participants to study the ancient markets from the point of social, entrepreneurial, and significance of the communities. The course on entrepreneurship is a blend of both theory and practice. The first-year participants study the city's markets such as the old market, Sunday market, and flower market to understand the art and science of doing business. Field visits are common in other streams such as sociology and anthropology. In management education, students in many business schools do their internship, in which they work in an organization for about two months to understand the nuances of business. This practice is followed for two reasons. One, exposure to the functioning of real organizations. Two, possibility of converting the internship into a regular job offer. However, field visit in an informal setting as part of the course is unusual in Indian setting. The participants reach out to these trading communities to get tips on doing business in a better way. According to the professor who designed the course, "the idea is to expose participants to different aspects of entrepreneurship through experiential learning." The course provides the exposure and helps the participants understand the challenges encountered by the entrepreneurs. The participants shared their learning from different business communities. The interaction with the entrepreneurs and the observation of their business help the participants learn better in the classroom.

In the context of experiential learning, scholars have also argued in favor of bringing experiences inside the classroom. For instance, it is argued that "the experiential classroom becomes a space that can allow intense situations involving frustration, anger, and conflict as well as playfulness and discovery to arise but also to be contained" (Kisfalvi & Oliver, 2015, p. 722). In the following section, we describe one such practice followed at Indian Institute of Management Bangalore.

### **Management Principles of Bhagavad Gita (MPBG)**

In this course, the participants were taught the management principles based on the Bhagavat Gita. The concerned faculty based on his individual expertise of Sanskrit language and Indic Wisdom of *Bhagavad*

*Gita* (*Gita* is a part of the Epic *Mahabharata*) prepared the course to bring the experience of *Mahabharata* to the classroom. This course is an elective for the second year MBA participants where they are taught to reflect and explore implications in business leadership and personal life. Specific linkage of strategies to action (*Karma yoga*), devotion (*Bhakti yoga*), knowledge (*Gnana yoga*) and Wisdom, and linkage with various outcomes in the materialistic/business world as well as its implications for leadership and daily life with exploration, practice, and reflection are attempted in the course. Starting as a weekend self-development/study and contemplation session over the years, it has evolved into a full-fledge management/leadership development elective. The participants remember the learning from the course years after their graduation.

The courses discussed above are driven by the expertise and interest of individual faculty members. Though the course is well received by the students, it is entirely the effort of these individual faculty members. The continuation of faculty-led courses depends on the availability of the faculty members, their interest, and the support of the institute/area. There are many such instances (e.g., the creativity course at IIMA), where courses could not continue due to faculty mobility or retirement.

### **Self-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills Course**

This is a core course offered in the MBA program at Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management, IIT Bombay. Having a dual-component design, the first part of the course (self-awareness) focuses on the intra-personal dimension comprising of self-inquiry, while the second part builds on the interpersonal dimension *vis a vis* enhancing communication skills. The underlying idea behind the design of the course is that the human self is composed of physical, mental, emotional, social, and vital aspects; hence, the pedagogy of the course shall also be integrative in nature, touching upon all these facets.

The course integrates the traditional pedagogical methodologies (lectures, presentations, and discussions) with what is known as contemplative pedagogy (Zajonc, 2013). Therein, the course content comprising of self-regulation, emotional awareness, strengths, and personal vision

is discussed by employing a mix of tools and frameworks such as time structuring matrix, *pancha-kosha* framework, energy audit, and so on. Also, the practice of reflection is emphasized by the instructor to examine the course content in light of the day-to-day experiences and events via photo-voices, group reflections, and mind mapping.

Further, a key element of the course pertains to offering Yoga (YBPs) and mindfulness-based Practices. As part of two stages, in the introductory session of 2 hours, training is offered in the externally expressed practices of Yoga like *Yamas* and *Niyamas*, *Asanas*, and *Pranayamas* based on the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) recommended by the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, a shorter version of the practices drawn from the CYP is conducted during the classes twice a week. The practices include five categories: (1) unfreezing through reverberation and body-tapping; (2) *Asanas* like *Vrikshasana*, *Hashtpadasana*, and *Tikonasana*; (3) *Pranayama* includes deep breathing (*Dirgha Pranayama*), high-frequency yoga breathing (HFYB; *KapalBhati*), alternate nostril breathing (*AnulomVilom*), and breathing with humming (*Bhramari*); and (4) Meditation (includes “Body Scan” and “Sitting Meditation”).

Embodied and mind-body practices such as Yoga and mindfulness entail a holistic view of self and multi-dimensional well-being. The constituting elements of Yoga and mindfulness-based practices can have potential implications on time and energy management, effective learning, ethical orientation, and harmonious behavior among the students.

Research studies conducted by the instructor and his team support the efficacy of the interventions practiced in the course. They found that YBPs and mindfulness help in retaining attention to one task or a lesser number of tasks at any moment, which prevents the dissipation of energy and increases emotional and mental engagement in the medium term (Kudesia et al., 2020). Another study further demonstrates that Yoga and mindfulness-based interventions help in developing the level of

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<sup>5</sup> [https://dipp.gov.in/sites/default/files/Internatioanl\\_Yoga\\_Day\\_2016.pdf](https://dipp.gov.in/sites/default/files/Internatioanl_Yoga_Day_2016.pdf).

moral reasoning (a precursor of ethical behavior) by increasing compassion and decreasing ego-centric bias in a few weeks of practice (Pandey et al., 2018).

## **AIM2Flourish**

At the Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, the Fowler Center for Business as an Agent of World Benefit (BAWB) created the AIM2Flourish program.<sup>6</sup> Considering the generally held negative belief about businesses (the instances of unethical practices, pollution, hostile takeover), the program aims at bringing a shift toward 'Business for Good' perspective by discovering stories of entrepreneurs and business leaders engaged in creating innovations for positive change.

AIM2Flourish is an experiential learning assignment, which starts in the classroom to learn about the strengths-based Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It moves out of the classroom wherein students identify, conduct in-person interview (AI), and write stories of businesses or entrepreneurs meeting one or more of the SDGs yet doing well financially. The stories are published on AIM2Flourish.com to further motivate the larger community (students, investors, and businesses).

Based on the data available on AIM2Flourish website, instructors (faculty members) from a number of Indian institutes have adopted the program in their course curriculum as means of imparting experiential learning. For reference, some of the institutes include Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Presidency University, Osmania University, Goa Institute of Management, Indian School Business, Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management (IIT Bombay), Xavier Labour Relations Institute, and Institute of Management Technology, Ghaziabad.<sup>7</sup>

The website also shares the stories of the respective businesses and their innovations identified by the students in India<sup>8</sup> which range

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<sup>6</sup> Accessed from <https://aim2flourish.com/about-us>.

<sup>7</sup> Accessed from <https://aim2flourish.com/schools/p2?location=IN>.

<sup>8</sup> Accessed from <https://aim2flourish.com/innovations/p2?schoolLocation=IN>.

from providing sustainable energy solutions, waste management, natural disposables, clean energy, hydroponics, sustainable supermarkets, eco-friendly architecture, tree-free paper, sustainable and eco-fashion, and many more.

## Level 2: Department Level

### Explorations in Role & Identity (ERI) at IIM Ahmedabad

IIM Ahmedabad (IIMA) was set up in 1961. It is declared as an Institute of National Importance (INI) by the Government of India. INI is a status conferred on the selected public higher education institutions in India that serve pivotal players in developing highly skilled personnel in India. The INI status is passed by the Act of Parliament in India. The Motto of the IIMA in Sanskrit language is “Vidhya Viniyogat Vikashaha,” i.e., in English language it reads as “Progress through the Application of Knowledge.” Explorations in Role & Identity (ERI) as a course was started about three decades back by two professors from Organisational Behaviour (OB) Area. Though the concerned faculty members have retired from their work at IIMA, the course is continuing. ERI is an experience-based learning course; hence, it is designed on the assumption that an individual requires space (*sthan*), time (*kala*), and someone (*patra*) with whom he or she can reflect on the journey of their life. The focus of this course is on relating to the self and others. It enables the participants to answer a few critical “being” and “becoming” related questions. For example, the participants make an inward exploration to explain who they are, the meaning and purpose of their individual life. In addition, they explore how they shape their own life and what they offer to the world.

The methodology followed in the course is highly participative and exploratory. No solutions or specific answers are given. Each participant is invited to share whatever aspects of the journey of life and relationships which he/she wishes to share. There are no compulsions for specificities of sharing. There is only an invitation, which an individual gives himself/herself for sharing and reflection. The participants are required

to maintain their individual logbook of reflection for each day of the program. They are encouraged to do a reflective book review. Finally, the participants are taken to a remote place for about a week to reflect on themselves, and they are expected to write an autobiography relating to the learning, concepts, and experience reflected in the ERI.

### **Indian Philosophy for Leadership Excellence<sup>9</sup>**

The Indian Philosophy for Leadership Excellence is a course in the Organizational Behavior area offered at XLRI, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand.

Leadership holds a special significance for organizations, given its criticality for their success and growth (Sarros et al., 2008). The Indian Philosophy for Leadership Excellence course is designed with a focus on the Indian perspective concerning effective (outstanding) leadership. Considering that Indian view is shaped by its diverse cultures and traditions, the course invites the participants to explore the philosophical heritage of India to study leadership from an approach that is novel and different from the Western view.

The course aims to build an appreciation of the Indian conception of leadership by discussing the need for an Indian perspective on leadership and integrating the concepts of *Purushartha* (*dharma*, *artha*, *kaama*, and *moksha*), *lokasamgraha*, *svabhava* and *svadharma*, and *rajaniti*. In light of the above deliberation, the course discusses the elements and personal attributes of outstanding leadership, how outstanding leaders create meaning for their followers, how they promote collaboration, nurture motivation, and manage conflicts. Further, the course dwells on the issues and challenges that may arise while following the Indian philosophy of business.

On the part of students, the 3-credit elective course encompasses reading material (cases, research papers) covering the ideas of workplace spirituality, consciousness, transformational leadership, and mindfulness in leadership. It also discusses the management issues based on scriptures: decision-making (*Mahabharata*) and holistic business management

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<sup>9</sup> The authors are grateful to Prof. Alok Kumar for his inputs. Prof. Alok is an Assistant Professor (Organization Behavior) at XLRI.



(*Bhagavad Gita*), and emphasizes an openness for Indian ideas to discover one's leadership potential and a willingness to think and reflect. A key component of the course includes writing a reflection paper. The reflection paper offers the students an opportunity to examine and reflect upon their own lives in light of Indian philosophy. It involves a student to consider a pressing issue in her/his life, which might pertain to the personal or interpersonal domain and may be aspirational or problematic in nature. Subsequently, the student explains in detail the key philosophical principles employed for analyzing the issue and one's learnings, and the course of action ascertained to manage the issue.

### **NGO Block Fieldwork<sup>10</sup>: Rural Practicum for MA—HRM&LR Students: TISS, Mumbai**

The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) was established in 1936 with the name of a renowned industrialist in India Sir Dorabji Tata. The institute was named as the "Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work" in Mumbai. In the year 1944, it was renamed as the 'Tata Institute of Social Sciences.' In line with the vision of the institute, the MA (HRM&LR) program aims "to develop students into professionally competent and socially sensitive management graduates" and "to sensitize students to the social, political, economic, and ecological environments of the society."<sup>11</sup> One of how the above objectives are achieved is through the classroom lectures covered in the foundation courses in the first year. Another means of exposing and sensitizing our students to social realities is the "NGO Block Fieldwork" in the fourth semester.

In the last few years, almost all leading management institutes have recognized the need for exposing their students to the economic and social realities of rural India in the course of their management education. Within TISS also, many courses, e.g., social entrepreneurship, disaster studies, social work, and habitat studies, have a rural practicum

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<sup>10</sup> The Authors are grateful to the valuable support by Prof. S. Palo, Dean (HRM& OD), TISS, Mumbai.

<sup>11</sup> Accessed from <https://admissions.tiss.edu/view/10/admissions/ma-admissions/ma-in-human-resource-management-labour-relations/> on July 25, 2020.

program. The students of the batch of 2014–2016 participated in a ten-day field trip to Meerut, Lucknow, and Varanasi to help the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM) in developing skills in the traditional sectors such as sports goods, chikankari, and silk handlooms. These students till date report that this experience was their most memorable and impactful learning experience during their two years at TISS.

The practices mentioned above are the illustrations of innovative methods used at the department level. Being the colleague of the same department/area, the other faculty members learned the experiences, values, and practices of the instructors and continued to offer the course even after the initial faculty members have superannuated from the institute. The course has moved from the individual level to the area level (e.g., the ERI course offered by the OB Area at IIMA). It minimizes the dependence on the individual faculty member, facilitates in getting the support from the institute, and has, in many ways, been institutionalized as an inherent part of the MBA curriculum.

### **Level 3: Institution Level**

#### **Rural Engagement Program (REP)<sup>12</sup> at IIM Indore**

IIM Indore is an IIM set up by Government of India in 1996. Rural Engagement Program (REP) at IIM Indore is a decade-old program as a part of the mandatory curriculum for the first-year MBA participants at IIM Indore. The objective of the program is to sensitize future managers and entrepreneurs regarding various schemes executed by the government for the upliftment and enhancement of rural areas, to study the operational challenges, and to analyze their effectiveness. Every year, a theme is decided in collaboration with the state government and UNICEF, an international organization. Based on the selected themes, projects are allotted to more than a hundred teams, each of which consists of five to six participants. For each team, the

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<sup>12</sup> The authors are thankful to Dr. Himanshu Rai, Director, IIM Indore for sharing the information with us.

schedule is pre-decided for a week-long stay, which includes visits to rural schools, households, local offices, and other public places. Participants have an opportunity to communicate with the officials of *Gram Panchayat* (village council) and *Zila Parishad* (district council), who execute the policies, and villagers who are the beneficiaries of the same. The participant teams obtain the required information regarding the implementation of various government schemes, understand execution challenges faced by the officials, and identify operational gaps on the part of the government. At the same time, the participants research to understand the expectations of the villagers from the government to solve their problems. The reports, including observations and suggestions provided by these teams, are then shared with the Government of Madhya Pradesh. In addition to getting sensitized to social issues, these future managers also tend to acknowledge gratitude toward the privileges of urban life, which until then go unnoticed. The experience of some of the participants is provided below.

According to a female participant, “REP was one of the most memorable experiences at IIM Indore, and it sensitized me towards the way of life through unique interactions with villagers.” Some participants changed their behaviors after experiencing rural India. For example, according to a participant, “after encountering a lack of the basic facilities in the village, I stopped wasting water and electricity of the hostel rooms which were earlier taken for granted and consumed with entitlement.” The program is a step forward to help the participants to become a socially responsible leader.

### **Rural Retreat<sup>13</sup>: XISS, Ranchi Rural Retreat for PM & IR Students**

Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS) is located in Ranchi, the capital of the state of Jharkhand in India. It was established by Fr. M. A. Windey with the objective of training young minds on Rural Development, Personnel Management, and Industrial Relations. Rural Camp

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<sup>13</sup> The authors are grateful to Prof. R. K. Agrawal, HOD, PM&IR, XISS, Ranchi for his valuable support.

has been an integral part of the Personnel Management and Industrial Relations (PMIR) program since its inception at XISS. The department organizes a retreat in association with some reputed NGOs like Society for Rural Industrialization (SRI) at Bariatu, Ranchi, Animation Rural Outreach Services (AROUSE) at Gumla, Jharkhand, and others. The retreat provides the students the opportunity to visit the remote areas (actual Bharat) and to discuss the societal problems and major issues with eminent social workers and activists. Bharat is the name of India in *Hindi* language. About 47% of Indian population are in agriculture, and about 22% live below the poverty line.<sup>14</sup> These people live in rural India and relatively less educated, poor. This world is called the Bharat. On the other hand, many people stay in urban areas, enjoy a great lifestyle, and speak foreign language. Their world is called India. There is a clear division in rural (Bharat) versus urban (India) areas. The purpose of Rural Retreat is to develop student's self-confidence and provide an opportunity to stay in the rural areas, learn from them, connect with nature, connect with natural resource management, connect with a crisis situation, and compare life between Bharat and India. During their stay in a rural camp, they also interact with villagers, village leaders, and Self-Help Groups or empowered women in different villages.

The retreat is an eye-opener for HR students for thinking out of the box, and they enjoy various sessions as a single family. Though the faculty members are supervising them, it is their program, and they are taking all the initiatives to make the program successful and meaningful.

### **Leadership Experiential Action Program (LEAP): Karma-Yoga**

Great Lakes Institute of Management is located at Manamai village near Mahabalipuram, a UNESCO Heritage Site 50 km south of Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The Leadership Experiential Action Program (LEAP), known as Karma-Yoga, is an integral part of the two management programs that Great Lakes offer: first-year Post-Graduate Program

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<sup>14</sup> Accessed from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html> on October 15, 2020.

in Management (PGPM) and second-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM). Karma-Yoga Project is accredited to Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), imparting responsible management education whereby it nurtures students to create sustainable value for business and society.

Realizing the challenge of effective leadership, the course is founded on the objective 'to connect students with ground realities and experientially learn transformational leadership.' Great Lakes has adopted 28 surrounding villages for the LEAP, wherein, as a part of the program, students visit the Karma-Yoga villages every week. Extended over two terms, the engagement in the first term is compulsory, while participation in the second term is voluntary.

The distinguishing aspect of the Karma-Yoga Program lies in its mission. Rather than having a short-term ad hoc orientation to the problems in the villages, the aim is to empower them on a continuous basis and make them self-efficacious to lead a better quality of life.<sup>15</sup> The students endeavor to build rapport with the designated villages via constant interactions and discussions to understand the status quo, and motivate people toward betterment through constructive suggestions and strategies, and over the years leading to lasting ties and concrete value addition.<sup>16</sup>

The key projects that have been implemented through the Karma-Yoga Program focus on sustainable development goals (SDGs) comprising of education, health, agriculture, and small business. For instance, with respect to the goal of poverty, students have carried out livelihood training and establishing kitchen gardens; for promoting good health and well-being, students have conducted medical camps, health and hygiene awareness; concerning the goal of quality education, students have organized spoken English and computer education classes.

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<sup>15</sup> Accessed from <https://www.greatlakes.edu.in/chennai/pgpm/karmayoga>.

<sup>16</sup> The authors are thankful to Dr. Arulsamy, Faculty Coordinator for the Karma-Yoga Project, for his inputs and student participants for sharing their experiences. Dr. Arulsamy credits the support of Dr. Bala V. Balachandran (Chairman and Dean Emeritus), and Dr. Suresh Ramanathan (Dean and Principal) for the successful functioning of the program.

Students share their experience describing that “Karma-Yoga Program offers an opportunity to learn management and leadership in a setting that is quite distinct from an organization or classroom. Although challenging at times, it is surely big learning.” Further, “Karma-Yoga Program acts as a platform to firstly get to know the people, the demography of the village and subsequently try to identify and address some of the key problems that they are facing. Coming from a privileged background, it gives an opportunity to delve into and address the real-life problems faced by people.”

### **Non-classroom Learning: Development of Corporate Citizenship (DOCC)<sup>17</sup>**

The Non-Classroom Learning (NCL) initiatives at S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR), Mumbai, Maharashtra, build on the ideas of living a life of authenticity, meaning, and inner satisfaction. It offers three levels of learning: self-awareness (understanding oneself), self-management (impact of self-awareness on intra- and inter-personal behavior), and societal awareness (understanding societal needs and the idea of Bharat). The five NCL initiatives comprise of *Abhyudaya* (mentorship program for underprivileged children), ADMAP (roles in committees supporting institute’s administration), DOCC, PG-Lab (course on personal leadership and team-building via experiential exercises), and Science of Spirituality (integrating insights from Eastern Wisdom traditions and the field of mindfulness for inner fulfillment and build leadership capabilities).<sup>18</sup>

Emerging from the call for enhancing the value addition of the academic curriculum, development of the institute, and contribution to the greater society, DOCC was envisioned and is currently a 25-years-old course at SPJIMR. The course aims to expose the students to the Indian ethos and culture by working on projects in the social sector

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<sup>17</sup> The authors are grateful to Prof. Chandrika Parmar for her support and the inputs. Prof. Parmar is an Associate Professor (Social Sector) at SPJIMR and the Program Director of DOCC.

<sup>18</sup> Accessed from <https://www.spjimr.org/overviewnonclassroom>.

encompassing health, education, aging, livelihood, women empowerment, climate change, and sustainability, to name a few, by way of a social internship. It is an institute level, 3-credit course conducted at the completion of first year requiring a full-time commitment of 4 weeks. Based on the requirement of the organizations, i.e., the 250+ partners and tie-ups across 26 states of the country, the students are randomly allocated to travel and stay with their respective organizations.

The social internship constitutes a complete on-site immersion at real locations of the partnering organizations, thereby providing a window to witness the ground reality and the unexplored side of India, i.e., rural India. It facilitates students to apply their in-class learnings in an unstructured environment to arrive at viable solutions for the prevailing problems. Over the years, students have come up with varied solutions such as branding (*dhaga* brand), business proposals, digital marketing inputs, supply chain streamlining, and so on. It seeks to establish a symbiotic and enduring relationship between the visiting students and the community. This is evident from the fact that some of the tie-ups with the partnering organizations have been decade long with some new ones coming up, even internationally (Nepal and Bangladesh).

As part of the evaluation process, the students present their work and submit their report to both the partnering organization and the designated panel comprising of faculty, alumni, representatives from the social sector, and the corporates. The criteria for evaluation include (a) students' ability to pause and reflect, i.e., their first impressions on arrival, engagement with the community, experiences, and stories on the field; (b) students' social sensitivity, i.e., their ability to identify the pressing issues, understanding them and providing potential solutions; (c) project report submitted. The social internship underlying DOCC denotes an affirmative step in cultivating broader considerations and responsible management among business school students.

## **Rural Living and Learning Experience<sup>19</sup>: School of Rural Management, XUB**

Xavier University (XUB) is located in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. The University has many schools, including the School of Rural Management. The School offers MBA program in Rural Management (RM). Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE) is a unique component of MBA (RM) Core course. During RLLE, two students (in exceptional case one or three) are assigned one village to stay for forty-five nights. The idea behind RLLE is that students get a first-hand experience of the village life. RLLE is founded on the efficacy of experiential learning and the importance of learning from the very people and communities they are expected to work with. RLLE is expected to lead students to cultivate the process of un-learning and examining their own biases and prejudices about contexts and providing opportunities to re-learn. This would enable the students to develop fresh perspectives and broaden their perspectives necessary for rural management professionals. The student needs to understand the challenges faced by the poor, deprived, and marginalized, in a rapidly changing social environment. The assignments, exercises, and documentation to be done during RLLE help the student to learn the pertinent and practical application of the classroom learnings and also enrich classroom discussion. Developing an understanding of social realities leads to a definitive commitment to the welfare of people.

The scheduling and execution of the programs are facilitated by the institutions. A dedicated team of members led by a faculty member takes charge of the program. Such programs at the institution level reduce the uncertainty related to the faculty interest, availability, resource constraint, and dealing with external stakeholders. In addition, it provides legitimacy to the program.

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<sup>19</sup> The Authors are grateful to Dr. S. S. Singh, School of HRM Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, for his valuable support.



## Level 4: Collective Level

### The Himalayan Outbound Program (HOP) at IIM Indore

The program is a combination of trekking in the Himalayas along with challenging team activities. The students are forced to go beyond their comfort and overcome challenges as a team, which usually results in learning from their own experiences. Students are divided into groups and given limited resources to complete the problem at hand. The teams compete against each other in a real-life setting through a series of activities and games that focus on teamwork, cooperation, and overall individual capacity building. Participants get an understanding of what leadership implies. They learn that teamwork in such settings requires a high order of cooperative skills. They learn to recognize and utilize the talents of everyone in the team. Through the physicality of the trek, they discover that most personal limitations that they have are largely imagined. The learning in this program is deep, often lifelong. The popularity of HOP practiced at IIM Indore has generated interest in other institutions. The HOP is being adopted by other institutions.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Individual experiences contribute to their professional development (Lynham, 2000). As a result, experience has long been regarded as necessary in honing the necessary skills. For example, interventions such as 360° feedback (Alimo-Metcalf, 1998), assessment development centers (Church et al., 2017), and outbound training programs (Rhodes & Martin, 2014) have long been used to develop important competencies. Surprisingly, learning through individual experiences as a pedagogical approach is in a nascent stage. In this chapter, we build on the importance of experiential learning in MBA education. Experiential learning offers a unique opportunity to narrow the knowing-doing gap. It provides a uniquely different dimension to business education by giving students to see the problem in a holistic manner, think innovatively, appreciate the challenges due to resource constraint, reflect

on the theory in use, and experience the emotions of managing the task, thus helping the participants grow (Datar et al., 2010). Further, we explored how the management institutions are using this experiential learning in their course curricula. While discussing the approaches used, we highlighted the practice at four levels: individual faculty level, department/area level, institution level, and the collective level.

Experiential learning requires a significant commitment of faculty time (Datar et al., 2010). The increasing popularity of experiential learning in management education raises several new opportunities and challenges for instructors (Kisfalvi & Oliver, 2015). Some of the concerns are the current practice of discipline-based training to the faculty members may not be well-suited to develop and deliver multi-disciplinary projects. Shifting instructor roles from the traditional way of providing lecture to helping participants learn through their emotions is another challenge. Some initiatives, such as adjunct faculty members, are increasingly practiced in many institutions, to facilitate integrative, experiential learning. Institutions in India have also started using simulations, role-plays to facilitate experiential knowledge of the participants. Institutions need to find out ways to facilitate experiential learning of their participants.

In this chapter, we have captured a number of powerful illustrations of experiential learning modules that are adopted and practiced successfully over the years in many business schools in India. Some of these illustrations highlight the innovative approaches at the individual faculty level, department level, institution level, and beyond the level of the institutions. These illustrations highlight two broad aspects: one, the acceptance of 'being' and 'doing' is increasing in Indian business schools. Two, the acceptance of the innovative practices is not confined to one level; they are moving from the individual level to beyond the institutional level, indicating that the practices are gaining legitimacy both within and beyond the institutions. While the above illustrations indicate the effort by few institutions/centers or even select professors, it appears to be at the threshold of further growth.

We further believe that for the success of the experiential learning approach, the active involvement of various critical stakeholders such as the faculty members, participants, and deans/directors of the institutions

plays a crucial role. The leadership at these institutions needs to facilitate ownership of the faculty members, so that other modes of learning make more considerable inroads to management education.

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