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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## UNDERGRADUATE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: A DEPARTURE FROM CONVENTIONAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION.

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### Abstract

The education which imparts students the expertise to be managers, business leaders or professors in business education is known as Management education. Whenever the issue of Management education is discussed, the discussion hovers around post-graduate management education. The degree of MBA is considered by laymen to be a passport to well-paid jobs with great prospects for advancement. According to a report by ASSOCHAM Education Committee, though MBA aspirants are fleeced by B-schools in terms of charging exorbitant fees, only 7% MBA graduates are actually employable which speaks volumes about the quality of education imparted by such schools. The same report states that around 220 B-schools had shut down in the last two years in the country and at least 120 more are expected to wind up in 2016.

Under such circumstances, the question is: how and where will the management degree aspirants get quality management education? This paper is an attempt to assess if this gap in management education can be filled in by undergraduate management education. The paper reviews the aspect of curriculum and pedagogy at undergraduate level and submits recommendations on strategies that will help in the developing and sustaining undergraduate management education in line with contemporary business trends coupled with societal care.

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### Introduction:-

The education which imparts students the expertise to be managers, business leaders or professors in business education is known as Management Education. It is multi-disciplinary in nature and aims to elucidate multidimensionality of organizational phenomenon. Whenever the issue of Management Education is discussed, the discussion hovers around post-graduate management education. The degree of MBA is considered by laymen to be a passport to well-paid jobs with great prospects for advancement. But is this the reality?

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**Current Scenario:**

A report by ASSOCHAM Education Committee states that though MBA aspirants are fleeced by B-schools in terms of charging exorbitant fees, only 7% MBA graduates are actually employable which speaks volumes about the quality of education imparted by such schools and that if they find job then they are unable to draw more than Rs 10,000 a month (ASSOCHAM, 2016).

On the other hand, one cannot say on the basis of unemployment of MBA graduates that Indian economy has reached its saturation point in absorbing such graduates. In an interview to Indian Express, Bakul Dholakia, the former Director of IIM-Ahmedabad opined:

It is not that there is a dearth of jobs; there is a dearth of those jobs that they want. Now the requirement is in the MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) sector. But they cannot afford the kind of salaries that business school graduates would expect. Students are also not interested in working there, because the business schools are not training them for smaller enterprises. (Yellapantula, 2015)

It is evident now that a gap exists between the availability of management professionals and the requirement of industry which largely but ironically consists of MSME. MSME is a growth driver in Indian economy 'with 38% contribution to the nation's GDP and 40% and 45% share of the overall exports and manufacturing output, respectively' (Kapuria). This makes MSME more vibrant than the corporate as far as job-creation is concerned. With increase in industrial activity, there will be manifold increase in the requirement of management professionals. Under such circumstances, the question is: how to man MSME with management professionals?

**Research Methodology****Objectives:**

1. To understand the gap filled in by the undergraduate management studies
2. To study the curriculum and pedagogy of undergraduate management studies and the changes required.
3. To compare the syllabi of BBA and MBA

**Type of Research:**

Descriptive

**Type of Data:**

Secondary data has been used

**Data Analysis****BBA and MBA**

With MBA degree unduly inflaming the expectations of management professionals, the answer to this question can be explored in Undergraduate Management Education. Undergraduate Management Education is commonly known as Bachelor of Business Administration or BBA program. It would be interesting to note that that MBA program is considered as a professional program having teacher-student ratio of 1:15 falls within the purview of AICTE. On the other hand, BBA program is considered as an outgrowth of Commerce Education falling within the ambit of UGC and under the jurisdiction of local university. As a result, it is difficult to ascertain and maintain teacher-student ratio BBA and so, BBA classes seem to be ever overcrowded. This distinction in regulating agencies has stymied the importance of BBA on one hand and made MBA program lucrative on the other. Admission to MBA is done through entrance exam whereas admission to BBA is by and large done on merit with the list prepared on the basis of 10+2 exams. Consequently, the colleges offering MBA program charge exorbitant fees while the colleges offering BBA charge fees slightly higher than that of B.Com. Taking into consideration the financial dimensions of Management Education and the socio-economic condition of our country, BBA can become a viable alternative in Management Education.

Though China considered over-emphasis on the development of Undergraduate Management Education as a strategic mistake (Wang, He, & Yu, 2005), there happens to be one more reason to develop BBA program. When future managers enter Undergraduate Management program after completion of their

schooling, they are blank slates. The dynamic nature of Management Education mandates that the student should be taken through the learning of concepts as well as its application. It is very easy to inculcate and develop in future managers the ability to think holistically at a young age when they are at BBA because by the time they enter MBA program, their minds are full of preconceived notions.

#### **Comparison between syllabi of BBA and MBA:**

In order to strengthen Undergraduate Management Education, one must understand the features which give MBA a cutting edge over BBA by studying the formats of BBA as well as MBA. An overview of BBA as well as MBA syllabi has revealed the following:

Apparently courses like Accountancy, Economics, Statistics, Management, Marketing, Finance, HRM, Strategic Management, ICT, International Business, Entrepreneurship, Business Ethics, Projects & Operations Management and so on appear to be common in both the programmes.

Partial overlapping of content seems to take place in courses which are repeated.

However, the actual difference appears to be in tools used to deliver curriculum and the evaluation method as well as student-teacher ratio.

Almost every university has completed first cycle of CBCS curriculum, yet their BBA syllabi do not appear to be upgraded in tune with the changing business/economic scenario. BBA syllabi describe objective of the program, course content and evaluation method but by and large silent on pedagogical tools to be used for curriculum delivery from which one can fairly assume that teaching method is quite passive with a one-way delivery of lectures. It can be inferred from evaluation method that the syllabi is text-bookish and encourages rote learning. It does not seem to offer any practical or industrial exposure except for the last semester wherein the students are required to prepare a project report on the basis of an industrial visit. Viva-voce is conducted on the basis of this report.

On the other hand, the syllabi of MBA look to be elaborate about not just objectives, course content, evaluation method but also pedagogy. It encourages student-centered learning. Case study method, Role-play, Simulations, Videos, Group-discussions, Presentations, Project work, internships, etc. are used as tools to foster creativity, innovation, team-work, managerial insights, communication skills, problem-solving skills apart from reinforcing concepts learnt as theory. Project report/dissertation submission entails internship of 4-8 weeks at industry which is later assessed through viva-voce. Apart from writing exams at the end of every semester in a conventional way, the students are continuously evaluated on the basis of quiz, presentations, role-plays, book/journal article review, case analysis, group-discussion and so on.

Difference in the formats of BBA and MBA has resulted into the change in role of Professors as well. MBA Professors are in the role of mentors and facilitators whereas BBA Professors seem to be reciters of bookish knowledge. On the whole, it can be surmised that BBA program exhibit absence of process through which students learn to transfer their learning from classroom to the workplace.

#### **Suggestions and Conclusion:-**

##### **Suggestions:**

BBA graduates can effectively man MSME provided its format is recast. The following suggestions can help in strengthening this format:

1. Curriculum should be reviewed and upgraded after every cycle taking into consideration the fast-changing nature of business. Relevance of BBA programmes can be established only if its curriculum is locally rooted with global outlook. In other words, the curriculum should reflect our business culture, traditions and approaches.
2. There is a patent need to bring about drastic changes in pedagogy and evaluation method.
3. Taking into consideration students' age and exposure, conventional method of lectures should be complemented by activity-based learning in order to instill among them that enduring knowledge, skills and aptitudes which are typical to MBA programme. However, such pedagogies should be devised keeping in mind cultural, work, social and economic system differences. Local, regional cases

should be discussed. Panel-discussion/group-discussion, role-plays and simulations can be effectively used to cultivate and develop business knowings among students.

Evaluation method needs to be overhauled. Any evaluation which encourages rote learning should be shunned. Generalized evaluation pattern across the programme should be avoided. Instead of testing students' retention of theories, the evaluation method should be so devised that it tests students' critical insight and their ability to apply their knowledge in practical situation. It would be desirable if course-specific evaluation methods are developed. Apart from written exams, it can be oral exams, open book exams, portfolios, case analysis, projects, group work, performances, presentations, posters and so on. Such method will also enable to do away with the practice of evaluating courses as stand-alone. For instance, a student assessed through PowerPoint presentation would not only require knowing the course for which he is tested but also have ICT and language proficiencies.

In order to cater to the local and regional requirements of industry, the concept of apprenticeship should be integrated with Undergraduate Management Education so as to create job-ready graduates armed with industry-relevant knowledge. Such initiative will not only enhance employability of young graduates but also supply MSME with an adequate pool of man-power.

Adherence to student-teacher ratio as per UGC norms and restriction on student intake would better the standing of BBA programme.

Last but not the least, the above-mentioned measures to strengthen BBA programme would yield desired results only if teachers qualified for and suited to Management Education are recruited. Complacency should not set after recruitment. Teachers should not only keep themselves updated with the latest trends prevalent in Business, Industry and Academics but also be able to integrate it with their instruction in order to keep teaching-learning process lively and relevant.

### **Conclusion:-**

The huge requirement of MSME for managerial professionals can be met speedily and satisfactorily by adapting and upgrading BBA programme. This will not only sustain Undergraduate Management Education in line with contemporary business trends but also do good to the society by enhancing employment opportunities.

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