

**PROBLEMS FACED BY AND STRATEGIES APPLICABLE  
FOR B-SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREA OF MAHARASHTRA  
STATE**

**Dr. Archana Ghatule\***

Education is a methodological effort towards learning basic facts about humanity. Whereas Management Education is increasing the understanding of the factors which influence the conduct of organization and providing students with tools and techniques that they can use to influence organizational life [Mehta, 2011]. Management Education is one of those new age courses which have more economic value in today's time. Most of the management education in India is in the form of MBA/MMS and PGDM or PGDBM and they are available at full time, part time, distance or online mode. The first full time MBA in India started in 1957 by Andra University and two IIM's in Calcutta and Ahmadabad appeared in 1961 and 1962 [Bowonder 2010]. Now the average number of B-Schools per state of India is 300.

In 1983, HRD started to give permission for self-financing institutes and collages, subsequently number of B-Schools started to grow. Now, the B-Schools are available at the rural areas of the country also. State government has adopted 70+15+15 pattern for admissions to management education courses; 70% students from local universities, 15% from other universities and 15% from out of the state. Since out of the state students and other university students opt for B-Schools in urban area, the profile of students in rural institutions remains by and large rural.

Although, India is called an agricultural country and though its 72% population (Census 2011) is said to be living in rural area, unfortunately the picture of basic education in rural area is not that much satisfactory. NGO Pratham's annual report says that there is high enrolment but poor quality education [infochange, 2010], So the students who have completed graduation from

\* Director, Savitribai Phule Shikshan Prasarak Mandal's, S.K.N. Sinhgad Business School, Gat. No. 664-669, Sinhgad Institutes, Korti Campus, Korti, Pandharpur, Dist. Solapur, Maharashtra, 413304.

rural area and are seeking admissions in MBA, PGDM or PGDBM have so many lacunas in them. Besides these basic lacunas in students, the B-Schools from rural area also face some problems while running B-Schools.

The thing is not that students from rural area are meagre, they have their own strengths. The thing is that the students are nurtured and habited in a way which is not suitable for a management education and that is why these students and B-School face problems in grooming them within 2 years.

### **Problems faced by B-Schools in Rural Area**

**Following are the problems that are faced by B-Schools in rural area:**

Habit of conventional teaching/learning-

These students have undergone the conventional education system and teaching methodology till UG level. So, they have got very less exposure to outside picture. They take the curriculum of management education in the same way as they have learned up to UG level. Due to this mind set, B-Schools in rural area have to start from very first day to change this picture. Changing the picture of basic education methodology from students mind set is a difficult task. Many time B-Schools in rural area themselves are not adoptable to the change. B-Schools fine basic hurdle here.

**Language, Minimum Communication Capability:**

These students are considerably weak in basic skills of language. In some cases, students need improvement in communication of mother tongue also.

B-School students are expected to communicate in English. But students from rural area face problems in writing Basic English also. B-Schools have to strive for improving this lacuna which has side effects in other areas of development of students.

**Basic Reasoning Skills:**

Student who are from rural area have shown very less performance in admission entrance test. Table-1 shows their performance in entrance test.

**Table-1 Performance in Admission Entrance Test**

Sr.No.	Range of Marks (out of 200)	Percentage
1.	55 - 75	15%

2.	75 - 100	65%
3.	100 - 125	15%
4.	above 125	5%

(Source: <http://hyd-news.blogspot.com>)

The table indicates that their basic reasoning skills are very poor.

### **Introvert, Shy and Passive:**

Students from rural background are by and large introvert, shy and passive. This is because of the social environment from which they have come. They have less exposure to the industrial environment. They cannot present themselves.

### **Inferiority Complex:**

B-Schools in rural area have to fight with the preconceived ideas of the students emerged out of their inferiority complex and no deep interactions with corporate world. Such student do not show readiness to change, are not ready to put efforts on their own development. They do not realize that the specific span of B-School education is very crucial and can twist their life from agrarian society to industrial society.

In worst cases, some students only enroll in the B-School for getting degree and due to its fascination. They treat the degrees like MBA, PGDM or PGDBM as ordinary UG degree. Such 10% students always disturb the overall environment of B-School classes.

### **Attitude towards Value Addition Courses:**

The core idea behind value addition is to cultivate essential values in the students so that the civilization that teaches us to manage complexities can be sustained and further developed [Mohanty, 2011]. The role of Value Addition Courses (VAC) cannot be denied in management education. Students of B-School are expected to complete VACs which will strongly support their degree and will show their competency in the market.

Problem with rural area students is their less enthusiasm regarding the VACs. They show very less interest in such type of VACs. The reasons are many like:

1. They are doubtful for their capability of doing two things parallel.
2. These VACs ask for additional fees. Their parents are incapable to pay the additional fees.
3. Students' belief that these VACs will not be that much useful for them.

Besides these problems related to quality of students, B-School face problems concerned with area where the B-School situates.

#### **Availability of Good Faculty:**

AICTE has put some norms for eligibility of faculty for MBA or other management courses. Other than AICTE norms, a faculty at B-School has to think beyond regular class room teaching. In short, a faculty at B-School must be multifaceted. But such good faculty is not ready to come down to rural area and there is lack of good faculty. The organizations running B-Schools face problems of good faculty.

#### **Incapability to Provide Good Infrastructure:**

B-Schools in rural area face problems in making and maintaining good infrastructure. It is difficult to get and manage well-equipped labs, hardware, software and basically the networking facilities. There are different reasons for it:

1. Improper management of funds led into lack of funds at proper time and for required infrastructure.
2. Availability of service providers in rural area are lacking. Although B-Schools are ready to build infrastructure, they do not get it very easily. To give a simple example, if any B-School desires to have lease line for Internet, it experience problems in fetching lease line from local ISP.

#### **Fewer Liaisons with Industries:**

These B-Schools do not have deep correspondence with industries. The industries in rural are also limited. The students of these B-Schools face scarcity of good liaisons with industries and they have to face the problem of lack of practical knowledge.

#### **Delayed DTE Admission Process:**

As per the DTE admission schedule for MBA, it takes month of September to get the perfect number of students for a B-School. The semester one become too trodden that faculties cannot complete their regular curriculum. The other activities they have to put apart.

In totality, the rural students have been nurtured right from the childhood and have their own financial and family problems. Due to these reasons, the other loopholes in their personality have been observed. But it is observed that if turned in right direction these students prove themselves better than the urban ones. The need is to change their way of thinking. As B-Schools get only

two years for this, changing ways of thinking is not that much trouble-free. But at least B-Schools can start for it. Some strategies or ways can be applied to do the same.

### Prerequisites

To apply the strategies, the B-Schools have to concentrate on some of the prerequisites as given below:

1. Good Faculty and Infrastructure.
2. Willingness to spend on Faculty and Infrastructure.

### Strategies Applicable

#### Semester Plan:

For preparing a all around MBA student for placement, B-Schools get very less time of one or two years that is of two or four semesters. Besides the curricular activities, the students have to be nourished with other inputs. B-Schools in rural area must have to proceed to improve them in Communication Skill and Soft Skills. To do this, if proper mapping will be done, the things become very clear. The care can be taken to let students achieve following mile stones at the end of each semester. Although the thing given here are ongoing processes and need continuous efforts, the B-Schools can start the start.

#### Sem.I - English Communication and Self confidence-

Efforts can be started immediately after starting of I<sup>st</sup> semester to improve English Communication. By continuous counseling and evaluation students can be made aware to the fact that they are weak in English Communication. It is also necessary that students' self confidence should be boosted and semester I is the right time to do this. Students can be forced to undergo different presentation- in person or in group. Efforts must be taken to reduce their shyness and inferiority complex. They can be asked to do self analysis. The good way is to record their presentations and show them and suggest the improvements in positive and friendly ways. No doubt, the rural area students will take it very optimistically. It seems somewhat difficult at first site, but if done in proper and positive spirit, it shows very good outcomes. Students get aggravated at early period of their management education and they get proper time for further development.

Once the students become good in English and self confidence, the platform for second semester is set.

**Sem.II** – General Awareness and Reasoning-

Semester II will be the right time to heighten them for general awareness and reasoning. They can be continuously asked to participate in Group Discussions, Debates and like events and can be provided with good platform to retain and increase their confidence. This is the time when they can be asked to undergo practical projects where they can be asked to work on areas like Shop Act, Patents etc. It will increase their practical awareness. They must be provided with some classes of reasoning.

This semester is also important concern to their specializations. The students must be asked to choose their major and minor specialization.

**Sem.III** –Interview Preparation and at least one VAC-

Third semester can be utilized very well to prepare them for facing interviews. Mock interviews must be conducted. Each student should complete one at least one VAC in this period. Third semester is the proper time to find the places for their placements.

**Sem. IV** –*Only Placement-*

Good placement is everyone's ultimate aim. So, in Semester IV, 100% efforts must be put on assisting them for searching job.

**Induction Program:**

For rural area students, the induction program can be utilized very well to include them in B-School environment. The induction program can be organized immediately after starting of Semester-I. The program can be from 1 to 5 days depending on objectives and contents we want to achieve and cover. Three days induction program can be conducted where students can be introduced with following things-

- General rules and regulations of the B-School.
- What they are expected to do in their curriculum?
- Four semester schedule.
- Library usage.
- Specializations
- Importance and introduction of Value Addition Courses.

- Project Elaborations.
- Placement Activity.

Induction Program can be utilized very well to counsel them for their overall development in their tenure of the course. This is one place when the process of self SWOT analysis can be started. They can be conveyed with the objectives and goals they should have and the efforts that will be required from their side to achieve these goals.

#### **Bridge Courses:**

To implement the semester plan B-Schools can take help of Bridge courses with the help of any specialized private organization. For Example, to achieve the Semester I plan, Institute can call reputed organization in communication area to train the students. Likewise weak student, after the regular class can be provided with extra classes for their weak area.

#### **Conducting and Promoting research in rural area:**

Rural area students find to be very hard working and good followers. This strength in them can be utilized very well for research in rural area. The students with the help of faculties can be asked to work on different issues of side by areas and can be asked to write papers on it. It will boost their self confidence and also will help faculties to do research work.

#### **Attracting MNCs and other companies:**

Many companies in new sectors like telecom, rural BPO and microfinance are creating thousands of jobs in villages and small towns [Vikaskumar, 2010]. Companies now have found out the hard working capacity and sincere attitude of rural area students. The B-Schools in rural area can take advantage of it and make strong liaison with the MNCs and other companies to improve placement.

#### **Pedagogical Approach:**

Besides the other strategies, improving Pedagogical Approach is one of the suitable methods. Faculties in B-School should personally take care of each and every student. They should try to find out the strengths of each student and try to boost the strength. Faculties can find out new teaching and learning methodologies by involving students in different activities and practical work.

**Micro-management System:**

Micro-management system is a good path for continuous counseling of the students. All students can be divided among the faculties. That particular faculty will mentor their progress, will find the weakness in them and boost the strong points in them.

Students from rural area admitting to B-Schools come with many loopholes. But if properly planned and continuously utilized the time B-Schools get, they show flying results. Their basic quality of hardworking helps them a lot. They only need a right direction and continuous healthy support from the B-Schools. The main thing they need is continuous counseling. The faculties should not tire to discuss with them by becoming their mentor. This strong support will give them good placement and career. Such B-Schools will also get good number of students. Likewise this healthy circle will go on. But main starting must be done from B-Schools.

**Reference:**

- Pooja V.Mehta & Nirali P. Vora (2011), 'Management Education in India- A Historical Development', Proceedings of 8<sup>th</sup> AIMS International Conference on Management, January 1-4, 2011.
- B.Bowonder & S.L.Rao (2010), 'Management Education in India: Its Evolution and Some Contemporary Issues', AIMA Journal of Management
- [www.infochangeindia.org](http://www.infochangeindia.org), 'High enrollment but poor quality education'
- Susant Mohanty & Rubul Kalita(2011), 'Attitude of Post Graduate Students towards Value Oriented Education', University News, 49(04), January 24-30 2011, p.g.-20-23.
- Vikaskumar, "Companies in new sectors creating rural job rush", The Economic Times, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010.