

Chapter 17

University Outreach in Management Education: A Case from India for Meeting the Needs of Professionals in the Field

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ABSTRACT

The need for a specialized course for non-profit management was perceived by University of Mysore and by a non-governmental organization of the region. The necessity and the importance of offering such a course at field level in close collaboration with the stakeholders concerned has been met logistically through the concept of outreach programmes. The approaches followed are relevant as in almost all functional areas of civic society there is a need for integration of management knowledge with that of other subject fields. It argues that the model of adopting bidirectional interactions, reciprocity, and participatory approaches may help addressing different issues in Indian higher education system by bringing the change from within the institutions and individuals. The case also demonstrates how using a leading NGO and university outreach centre as linker units, the outreach concept can be made successful in Indian context. It is argued that this kind of model using outreach concept may prove useful in India not only for implementing government's ambitious projects like 'Mission 2007 – Every Village Knowledge centre' or 'skill development centres,' but also for community and regional economy development using university knowledge resources in close collaboration with those who need it. Another important aspect of this approach is that it is related to civic development and in turn to economic development and not directly to economic development unlike the entrepreneurial university.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is stated that higher education exists to serve the public interest and is not a commodity. Its mission is to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole by educating highly qualified graduates who are able to meet the needs of all sectors of human activity (AUCC, 2001). In contrast to this mission, contribution from higher education institutions towards society is often conceptualized in terms of economic development only by addressing the research and person power needs of business and industry. The mission of higher education can be fulfilled only when the universities are able to serve the whole society and not just economically important institutions. It is necessary that they develop appropriate strategies within the existing framework to withstand the pressures arising from economic, globalization and commercialization processes to reach out to all sectors of the society. Though the need for reforms in the education system and the need for university reaching out to society is reiterated by several commissions and educationists in India (Kothari Commission, 1966; Sam Pitroda, 2007; Yashpal, 2008, 2009; Balram, 2008; Anandakrishnan, 2008), the change as envisaged by these commissions is constantly alluding the Indian higher education system. Narasimharao (2009) discussed the role of university outreach programmes in meeting the demands of knowledge society. When outreach and engagement concept is applied in its true sense, as projected by Boyer (1996) and Magrath (2006) it can help in expanding the boundaries of scholarship and change in values, norms and goals from within the system. However, the concept is in its nascent stage in India and need to be evolved through various models and strategies. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate through a case study, how a collaborative partnership between a university and a local non-governmental organization (NGO) in India under the outreach concept might throw light on the approaches to

developing and designing management courses that meet the needs of professionals of different sectors working in the field. The chapter also seeks to indicate as to how such collaborations could break the institutional and discipline centric barriers and facilitate development of higher education modules that respond to societal needs of the day. The presentation is more of a grounded theory approach. That is outreach concept was implemented for offering a programme at field level for NGOs adopting different approaches. This process we studied and theorized on the basis of literature. This Chapter is presented starting with background literature giving the relevance of the case studied to management education. This is followed by methodology and discussion on the need for a specialized course for non-profit management sector. The next section on developing course structure briefly describes the approaches that are followed for treating the subject to suit the needs of professionals at the field level. This is followed by a discussion on the relevance of this case to Indian higher education in general.

2. BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Even though Management Studies as a stream in higher education was introduced way back in 1881, it grew in popularity only in the 20th century in response to the needs of business houses applying scientific methods to manage their operations and human resources. The management discipline as seen today was evolved over the years as per the changes and demands in industrial practices—quality control in the 1920s; operations research and cybernetics in the 1950s; total quality management in the 1980s; and reengineering in the 1990s. We will not be reviewing the evolution of management education which is extensively discussed in literature from different perspectives. What is important here is to identify that management education is in critical condition and it need to move from the traditional discipline based list of

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