

# QUALITY, ACCREDITATION & RANKING

A Silent Revolution  
in the Offing in  
Indian Higher Education



Editor  
**H. Chaturvedi**

A very timely and thoughtful book on the role of quality, accreditation and rankings in improving India's higher education. In a world where what will matter most is the human talent, ensuring quality education is key to India's prosperity and global admiration.'

– **Jagdish N. Sheth**  
*Kellstadt Professor of Business, Emory University, USA*

B L O O M S B U R Y

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# EXCELLENCE IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION THROUGH RIGHT VALUE CREATION: A CASE STUDY OF JAIPURIA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, NOIDA

RAJIV R. THAKUR AND DEEPAK SINGH

## INTRODUCTION

It was at one of the Board Meetings in the year 2013 where the Chairman of the Jaipuria Group expressed his deep determination to take Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida, ahead into the future and ensure its leap forward into the next higher orbit of management institutions. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Board of the Jaipuria Institute collectively laid down the vision of attaining a position in the top 30 ranks of management institutions in the country. The Director of the Institute, who was also present in the meeting, was delegated with this Himalayan task and he readily accepted it as an overwhelming opportunity for himself and his team.

No sooner was the Director out of the meeting ideas started crossing his mind about how to shape the roadmap for taking the Institute to new horizons beyond

its current accomplishments and attain the 'Top 30 Vision'. Having being in existence since 2004, the Institute had carved a niche for itself among peers in the region and the challenge was now to carve out a trajectory which would catapult it to its new envisioned position amidst the highly competitive scenario of the region. Of the many scribbled papers which the Director had before him in the next few hours, on the top he wrote in bold and big letters 'Right Value Proposition'. The dilemma on his mind was whether to break conventional boundaries of thoughts and move ahead of the peers by outlining 'right value proposition' for students as the real differentiator for his next bold moves or to be stuck in the often repeated 'student-centric' approach.

The Director, being a professor of strategy, opted for the celebrated 'Resource-Based View' theory and called for an extensive 2-day exercise in the middle of the year 2012 called 'Visioning Workshop' for developing the shared vision and action plan of making Jaipuria Noida the 'Most Aspired B-School' (Business School), nationally with the long-term intent of taking the Institute to the bracket of the Top 30 in the country. The brief was to discuss the stated dilemma of whether to evolve a shared understanding of the 'right value proposition' as the key differentiate or for the future or to look for an improvised model of 'student-centrism' itself.

The faculty and staff members each made a 15-minute presentation on four key points of deliberations—'Jaipuria Noida as it stands currently'; 'Jaipuria Noida as it could have been'; 'Jaipuria Noida tomorrow'; and 'My contributions to shape it for tomorrow.' The challenge was how to carve out processes along the guiding principle of 'Creating Relevance for Industry and Society' in all the activities of the Institute, leading to its growth and institutional vision accomplishment. The presentations were made on activities ranging from skill creation, knowledge creation and dissemination, research and publication works, training and consultancy, social outreach, etc. As this extensive exercise was taking place, the technology readied itself to capture those unique moments that rolled as a new initiative to define the future journey of the Institute.

## BACKGROUND

The Jaipuria Institute was driven by a lofty and highly ambitious vision of joining the league of top 30 management institutes in India and benchmarks it with global practices and standards while a highly competitive and regulatory environment coupled with uncertainties about relevance and future of management education

itself loomed large. At the time (in the 2010s), the landscape of management education was in a state of flux with multiple emerging scenarios shaping fluid boundaries. The plethora of technological interventions was opening different opportunities of diverse online platforms for content delivery and short duration courses were rising in demand (Hall and Young, 2011). Massive open online courses (MOOCs) were being offered by a host of reputed institutions of global eminence, throwing a new challenge to the existing fabric of teaching-learning process. The demand for full-time programmes was inconsistent and management entrance examination applicant figures fluctuated year-on-year. This led to the closure of many private colleges offering management programmes as well as the curtailing of management education seats in others. The writing was on the wall for the remaining management institutes to create and deliver the right value proposition. The call was clear to go back to the basics of understanding new dimensions in management education and align the entire curricula to the requirements of major key stakeholders, especially students and corporates.

## GROWTH OF MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

The Indian higher education system ranks among the top three countries of the world with the United States and China above it, on the basis of student enrolment (Wikipedia, 2017). Management education in India dates back to the pre-independence period with college-level education coming up in Mumbai and Delhi during 1913-20 (Balamurugan and Dharsini, 2017). In that period, the focus was to impart business and commerce knowledge in areas as diverse as banking, transportation and accounting, etc. Since then, the number of institutions imparting management education has gone up by multiple folds. Management education across the globe has seen some dramatic developments and is facing a unique crisis of relevance. India is also not untouched by the perception of quality assurance (Mahajan et al., 2014). There are pertinent issues that need to be deliberated upon and addressed before the B-schools take a leap forward to attain a position in the true global rankings. The encompassing issues that need addressing in global context are related to quality of student intake, teaching-learning pedagogy, curriculum architecture, industry-institute interface, alumni connect, global collaborations, digital platforms of content delivery, placement and compensation packages, faculty development, internal quality assurance, accreditations and rankings, social outreach programmes, etc. (Jha and Kumar, 2012).

## JAIPURIA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT, NOIDA

Jaipuria Institute of Management, Noida (India) is a part of the Jaipuria Group of Management Institutes. Jaipuria's journey in education began in 1945 with the establishment of the Jaipuria College in Kolkata. Today, 70 years after its inception, the House of Jaipuria continues to deliver superior quality education consistently. It is this unique heritage spanning seven decades and four generations that sets the group apart from other educational institutes in the country. The Jaipuria ethos is focused on creating and nurturing the next generation of thought leaders through intuitive education. The sister institutes are located in Lucknow, Jaipur, and Indore. The state-of-the-art campus, established in 2004 at Noida (Uttar Pradesh), is in the heart of the corporate hub of the National Capital Region (NCR) that provides students with wide exposure to a number of industries. The Institute currently offers three 2-year full-time Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) programmes approved by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE): PGDM, PGDM (Service Management), and PGDM (Marketing). The vision of the PGDM programmes is to nurture world-class professionals committed to create value enhancement, service mindedness, business leadership, entrepreneurial orientation and societal consciousness. Jaipuria Institute of Management is a mini-India in itself with a rich cultural diversity and geographical spread of its students and faculty hailing from different states of India. It is this mixture of various regions of India with diversified cultural backgrounds, academic and professional experiences which makes its campuses one of the most exciting and enriching business schools in India.

While the various programmes offered at Jaipuria Noida as described in following paragraphs are suggestive of its ambitious future plans, the environment in which it is operating is quite a challenging one. Nevertheless, Jaipuria Noida has few strong pillars basis which it embarked upon certain bold moves and was successful in creating an institute of excellence. However, with the emerging challenges it was not an easy task to carve out a new direction for itself. In the following paragraphs we get a glimpse of all these.

### PROGRAMME OFFERINGS

The AICTE-approved 2-year full-time PGDM was started in 2006 at Jaipuria Noida. Keeping in view the robust growth of the services economy, PGDM (Service Management) was added in 2007 and PGDM (Marketing) was started in 2008 by the Institute as the need for professionals grew in the domain of marketing.

The 2-year full time PGDM programme is approved by AICTE and is recognised by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) as equivalent to the MBA programme that is designed to develop world-class management professionals with a strong value system. The other two programmes, namely, Services and Marketing, are also AIU recognised. Well-established and perfected over a period of time, the PGDM programme's industry-oriented syllabi and the curriculum are constantly updated to remain contemporary as well as futuristic in orientation in order to groom managers to be ready to meet the ever-changing demands of global business. 'Learning by doing' methodology encourages the students at Jaipuria Noida to go beyond the classroom and gain first-hand experience of managing in the real world. Our student-centric approach provides flexibility to students to study courses of their choice and earn dual specialisation from amongst a large number of elective and innovative courses available.

The AICTE approved 2-year full-time PGDM Service Management (SM), is a specialised programme with a focus on the services sector. The programme aims at grooming service-minded professionals for managing the vast and the fast-growing services sector. This sector today offers the largest number of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities both in the new-age economy as well as in the proven sectors such as banking, finance, insurance, real estate, Information Technology enabled Services healthcare, media and communication, entertainment, retail, consultancy and research, etc. The other unique feature of this programme is that students may also combine it with a specialisation in finance, marketing, human resource management (HRM), information technology (IT) and others. Well-perfected over a period of time, the industry-oriented syllabus and curriculum of this programme are, like our PGDM programme, constantly updated to remain contemporary as well as futuristic in orientation. We are thus able to groom managers to be ready to meet the ever-changing demands of the service industry.

The 2-year AICTE-approved full-time PGDM in Marketing, i.e. PGDM (M), is a management programme with special focus on marketing management. The programme aims at grooming creative and energetic young professionals to manage the challenges of the vast size and diversity of the Indian and global market. Marketing of luxury products, products mass-customised for the fast-growing middle-class consumers, developing niches within the rural rich, catering to the huge Bottom of the Pyramid market, fashion marketing, creating winning advertising and sales promotion campaigns, building brands through social media, discovering unstated wants of consumers through research and Business to Business marketing are among the several issues that are covered in this super-specialised programme in marketing management. Marketing has

gained a pre-eminent position in managing the fast-globalising Indian market. The emergence of global lifestyles and brands, the shift towards low-cost global production centres and a growing demand for global standards of customer service have added further to the burgeoning demand for qualified marketing professionals. So much so, that it is hard to name a product, service or organisation – whether organised for profit, not-for profit or non-profit – that does not require a professional plan for the marketing of its products, services, ideas or ideologies. No other job or function can parallel the exciting and fast growth and reward-oriented jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities of this sector. The students of this super-specialised course, PGDM (M), have an edge over others in this regard. Another uniqueness of PGDM (M) programme at Jaipuria is that students of this programme may also combine with their specialisation elective courses in finance, HRM, IT, international business and others.

## JOURNEY AHEAD

During the 2-day visioning exercise conducted at the Institute in middle of the year 2012, after a healthy exchange of ideas and debate, faculty and staff were able to align themselves with the need for a model which focused on creating 'Right Value Propositions' as the key differentiator. This new approach meant that the model of 'student-centrism' had to be weaved with 'industry-centrism' which required a bold move to reach out to corporates to design the 'must-know-and-equip' as desired by the industry. It was further emphasised during the workshop that this would not be generated merely by knowledge and degree; rather the right value should be seen in the students' readiness in terms of developed skills and ability to apply knowledge in the real business world both locally and globally. This corresponded to the need of both industry and students where focus had shifted from mere knowledge creation to application of knowledge and skill building, ultimately leading to industry readiness of students (Agarwal, 2009). Alongside this, the thrust was to benchmark the entire model of teaching-learning with global standards and prepare the Institute for long-term aspirations of creating its recognition in the global management education arena.

## INTERNAL CHALLENGES

In this journey towards excellence, there were the expected issues that needed to be addressed by the Institute. Since stakeholders had to deliberate on the four defined parameters discussed in the workshop i.e. 'Jaipuria Noida as it stands



currently'; 'Jaipuria Noida as it could have been'; 'Jaipuria Noida tomorrow' and 'My contributions to shape it for tomorrow', it called for moving out of routine thinking to out-of-the-box thoughts. The dimensions of perception of what made great institutions differed and so did the approach to reach the Top 30 league among the stakeholders. The visioning exercise brought forth multiple deliberation points cutting across teaching-learning models, research and consultancy, corporate connect, student intake process, international collaborations, accreditations and rankings, to name a few. The 2 days of deliberations and rationale-making brought ample clarity and consensus among the faculty and staff and a common bond prevailed over differences of approaches in the journey towards a futuristic plan of action.

Fairness and transparency of expected Key Result Areas was another issue to be sensitively handled. A self-initiated performance benchmark, co-shared and agreed with the management team, saw the alignment of action points. The collective belief of building a world-class management institution bound the team together when minor hiccups surfaced at points.

Re-defining systems and processes to shape as a major enabler was another point to ponder. The new ways of organising issues required a new set of resources, processes, and procedures. Strong backing from the management to shape them came as a major boost as task-teams were empowered to take decisions on the consensus of the faculty council when put to review before implementation.

Under the current plan, the faculty had to take up additional responsibilities beyond the previous years as research and Managing Development Programme capacity building expectations were laid down. Additional student mentoring and academic administrative activities sometimes bogged down the faculty and were perceived as an overload of responsibilities. The development of new responsibility heads in academics, research, student affairs, MDP and international relations eased this challenge.

The student quality was a challenge and had to be handled both in classrooms and outside. Introduction of video technology in classrooms, tutorials, experiential exercises, student excellence councils, mentoring, and development cycles, were among the major activities initiated to meet this challenge.

## JOURNEY AHEAD: EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

The external challenges towards attaining the vision to make a place in the Top 30 management institutes were quite strong and many times unexpected. The

cyclical downturn in different sectors of the economy was affecting the growth of management institutions. This had resulted in the closure of many B-schools across different states in the country.

The regulatory bodies for management education had many policies that required revision in tune with emerging scenarios but were perceived as unattended to. Several policies towards management institutions, particularly with regard to diploma programmes, have been seen as a major deterrent to the management's whole-hearted commitment and resource spending.

The students and parents in the Indian context had a different take on reality when it came to the choice of a degree versus a post graduate diploma programmes, which majorly went in favour of degree programmes.

Even top B-schools were facing stiff and growing competition with newer Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), private universities, overseas management institutions, and other career opportunities in banking, IT and telecom courses that affected the pool of management education aspirants, hence affecting the quality of students and thereby slowing down the process of accomplishing the vision and mission statement of Jaipuria Institute in true words and spirit.

Delhi-NCR being a cluster of reputed management schools and a destination for global schools, new benchmarks in teaching – learning process, curriculum development and new skill generation, technological tools are fast emerging and therefore the scale, speed and trajectory of Jaipuria's growth has to keep pace with the fast-changing landscape for it to remain relevant and be the first choice among other B-schools.

Industry demands are changing with newer skills in demand; besides new sectors are emerging as opportunities for placements. Hence, the corporate sector needs to be understood accurately and catered to for futuristic growth. This calls for a regular revision of curricula and courses, requiring more investments in capacity building.

A growing demand by accreditation bodies on research and consultancy output and growing competency of the faculty requires the continuous support of faculty and top management. Hence, the success parameters of any B-school would require a committed focus on quality in terms of knowledge and skill creation, in terms of faculty and its competency, the additional value processes which create futuristic and frontier skills. Brands should have substance in them and mere branding and marketing are doomed to fail.

## PILLARS OF GROWTH: THE BOLD MOVES

The translation of 'right value proposition' in management education meant breaking conventional boundaries of thoughts and moving ahead of the peers, most of who were struck in the often repeated 'student-centric' approach. The need of the hour was moving the philosophical quotients of management learning to a direction where 'right value' was to be seen through the lens of the students' readiness in terms of developed skills and ability to apply knowledge in the real business world. The entire spectrum needed a revisit to address the basic tenets of management education where core context was related to quality of student intake, teaching-learning pedagogy, curriculum architecture, industry-institute interface, alumni connect, global collaborations, digital platforms of content delivery, placement and compensation packages, faculty development, internal quality assurance, accreditations and rankings, social outreach programmes, etc.

A core task force of corporate domain, with the rich and varied background, was constituted and they were tasked with curriculum design on a clean slate, keeping in mind the industry needs of management graduate attributes in light of evolving business landscape across different sectors.

The first frontier to be re-casted as a result of this exercise was 'Curriculum Design and Teaching-Learning Process'. There was a major shift in focus on what was being taught, how it was taught and management of 'Assurance of Learning'. The Keep It Short and Simple (KISS) principle was enforced while curriculum review of all management programmes was done. The exercise of addition and deletion of courses followed with the core conceptual base as contents with clearly defined learning outcomes (LOs) which were simplified and matched with what the industry needed in terms of skills, knowledge, attitude, and behaviour. Experiential learning formed the bedrock as mechanisms were devised to map assurance of learning. Tables got turned as corporate captains presented their academic output to a team of senior faculty members. Intense deliberations erupted to capture the viewpoints of both sides which converged and deviated at multiple junctions of the teaching-learning process proposed by the corporate group. A consensus saw the conception of a refreshing new curriculum where clarity and purpose of management education were reflected, factoring in futuristic frontiers of knowledge and skills. The area of marketing was the first to be reviewed as most of the recruitments were of the graduates specialising in this area. The Marketing Management (MM) course was bifurcated in two trimesters with a conceptual build-up in the first term and complete field exposure in the second term. The modular evaluation was initiated in MM-I to ensure assurance of

learning while all fieldwork in the second term was preceded by a briefing session for defined outcome and de-briefing by students in the class post the field visit to complete the learning and sharing loop. The end output was the development of a marketing plan by the students to correspond with higher order learning which was presented to external experts from the industry for validation. Similarly, the Sales Management and Business Development course was mandated for all the students as the industry desired that the students be equipped with the concepts of sales and business development before they join any department in the company. To cope up with the frequent redundancy cycle in the future, new courses on analytics, social media, and digital space were incorporated. Additionally, instead of run-of-the-mill electives offered by peer institutes, sector-specific courses in the sunrise service industry including rural markets were floated as electives in the second year at the institute as value differentiators.

Bringing technology to mainstream learning in classrooms through video learning was another frontier. It not only brought in a rich reservoir of lectures and other learning content but also provided students a platform for learning at their own pace. The collaborative learning through discussion forums and virtual classrooms with seamless integration with e-learning software from Learning Management Solutions offered a new canvas for innovative teaching-learning model. The academic integrity was maintained by the use of anti-plagiarism software and incremented the quality of academic outputs.

Corporate Training and Development (T&D) of students got a new thrust as it was identified as the core thrust area to make students industry-ready beyond classroom exercises. Focusing on behavioural preparedness as well as developing the application part of knowledge became important in the new context of industry-driven curricula. Challenges of a diverse pool of students and the wide and varied expectations of different industries and companies as well as the new emerging expectations from industry crystallised the thought of developing critical thinking, analytical ability, and higher order thinking skills as central to management education. It was accomplished by introduction of new courses of 'Training and Industry Interface', and 'General Awareness Course' as mandatory courses spread across semesters in addition to a bouquet of pedagogical tools including cases, group assignments, fieldwork, extra-curricular activities, community surveys, live projects, sales campaigns, etc.

Student mentoring through the industry, alumni, and a dedicated faculty mentor became a signature activity at the Jaipuria Noida, which led to the transformative process in mentees and was reflected during placement drives as well as in inter-

college competitions. There was a steep rise in the participation and winning quotient of students as well as in the employability of students. The 'Individual Development Plan' further injected corporate training of individual students as the college invested heavily in bringing forth the development points for each student and provided a customised training and development plan.

Student centricity saw newer heights during all activities on campus with the formation of 'Student Excellence Council' where the onus of all student welfare activity was laid on shoulders of students. Student empowerment brought to focus their involvement in planning, initiating, and implementing various activities on campus. The student-driven campus has been benefiting students in various ways to help them emerge as completely industry-ready personalities.

Value-based education and grooming for students resulted in sensitising them towards peer group, family and society in general as they were weaved in right from the 'Orientation Week' as students stepped on the campus. A healthy combination of yoga, meditation and cultural activities of Spic Macay brought the connect to Indian cultural heritage with learnings of contemporary management practices.

Corporate connect saw the evolution of multiple 'Centres of Excellence' as the institution became vibrant with a host of MDPs, consultancy, and community outreach opportunities, together with research projects for students and faculty. There was also a spurt of area conclaves, annual conferences and international conferences to enhance academic and research output at national and international levels.

Similarly, the other thrust area was to build the capacity of faculty through dedicated in-house and external participation in conferences and workshops. Dedicated 'seed money' was allocated to all faculty for research and consultancy initiatives. A liberal promotion programme was put in place to further boost research output of the campus which saw a dramatic increment of quality and the number of papers published increased to more than five times the previously recorded numbers. Faculty also participated in Faculty Development Programmes and workshops at IIMs, Indian School of Business and the likes to build teaching-learning experience for the students. The self-assessment reports by faculty for each course delivered and continuous academic assessments by the Internal Quality Assurance Peer team strengthened the teaching-learning process, in line with global standards.

International exchange programmes saw students visiting international campuses and also receiving international students at the local campus for a truly cross-

cultural experience. The host of international guest talks and visits of ambassadors infused the right sensitivity of the global marketplace. Student research output also started growing with the formation of the student research cell. They were promoted for competitive participation in research conferences as well as management conclaves.

Annual retreat for faculty with corporate and curriculum revision exercise was made more rigorous and brought the right value creating platforms in academic content and pedagogies. The collective leadership processes of faculty councils with an advisory team in each academic area (called Area Academic Councils) brought the much-needed focus on assurance of learning mechanism. This boosted the team spirit, collegiality, and sensitivity towards quality assurance at all touchpoints.

## THE RESULTS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The results of the innovative initiatives undertaken at the Jaipuria Institute bore fruits in desired outcomes. The stakeholders' perception index showed appreciable improvement as corporate revisits for placements and campus interventions increased. The students' satisfaction scores improved as their campus surveys brought better 'thumbs ups'. The placement conversions, better compensation packages, diverse pool of placement companies, higher alumni involvement, improved bondage and brand association with Jaipuria Noida plus their bond with faculty and staff reflected in better word-of-mouth to the external community. The other areas such as better application numbers, improved rejection rates in admissions, quality improvement in test scores, better gender ratio balance and a diverse pool from a larger number of states led to the development of national footprint.

The passion to encourage students to think out of the box, to learn and imbibe the nuances of management practices, to innovate and to make informed choices was acknowledged when the Institute was re-accredited as a Grade A institute by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 2017. The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) has granted Equivalence Certificate to the three PGDM programmes offered by the Institute with MBA degree and they have received National Board of Accreditation (NBA) accreditations in 2015. Another respectable ranking presented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, ( National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) has ranked Jaipuria Noida as 26th among the top B-Schools in the country in 2016.

The Institute now embarks on its journey to be amongst the next higher league of top B-schools globally and has gone back to its boardroom with think-tanks for redefining its teaching-learning processes and global accreditations besides upscaling its collaborations with industry, community, and international universities.

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