

Learning beyond management

HIGHER EDUCATION The MBA course not only equips you for a lucrative career, but also helps you develop life skills, writes V Pradeep Kumar

Decades ago, most students were opting for engineering or a medical course. The trend today is different with students opting for a management course and some doing so after their engineering course. I was curious to know why they choose an MBA course and met a few students, after the recent CAT. The responses were varied:

“I guess an MBA degree offers easy employment options, through campus placements” (Nagaraj).

“Many of my friends are doing MBA, and so I thought I should do one too” (Vidya).

“It was my father’s suggestion” (Narayanan).

“I am doing an MBA as it is important for a marketing career” (Rafeeq Ahmed).

While it’s true that the employment market is better with an MBA degree in hand, that shouldn’t be the only reason to go in for an MBA. There should be stronger reasons, such as career planning, as expressed by Rafeeq. To be successful, choose a career according to your aptitude, with an MBA as part of the plan.

The key questions to ponder are: ‘What does an MBA course teach you? How does the course prepare you to meet the challenges in business? What are the value additions that are useful in your personal life too?’

Relevant course content

Business is about managing resources efficiently, with proper planning and execution. An MBA prepares you to



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handle this responsibility. You are given an overview of strategic and operations management, marketing, finance, legal and human resources management.

The focus in the second year of the degree is towards an area of specialisation — marketing, finance, systems, international

marketing, and human resources, etc.

An MBA course also incorporates summer projects in business houses, to give a practical orientation to what one studies. The MBA course content therefore takes into account, actual business requirements.

Teaching methods

Unlike most other courses, the best thing about an MBA course is the innovative teaching methods - class-room sessions, assignments, project work, case studies, debates, management games and guest lectures from industry professionals. This diverse

teaching method with a high degree of participation and interaction develops your communication and presentation skills, which are critical for success in business.

Attractive employment opportunities

With a booming Indian economy, the overall business environment is flourishing. The rise of the service industries such as IT and ITES, banking and financial services, retail and hospitality has led to increased employment opportunities. Further, all other industries require fresh management graduates, every year. Consequently, an MBA in any specialisation has an easy job market.

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An MBA course teaches you basic life principles which are useful in business and personal life as well:

■ **Analytical thinking:** An MBA course helps you learn to think analytically, collecting all relevant data, considering the pros and cons, as a prelude to decision making. Challenges and obstacles are normal in day-to-day life and analytical thinking is a great help.

■ **Sense of planning:** With a mind tuned to the concepts of planning, you apply them in practical life, whether it is a marriage, buying property, making investments or even planning a holiday.

■ **Contingency plans:** In management, you expect the unexpected and prepare with contingency plans. Similarly

even in personal life, if Plan A doesn’t work, you are mentally prepared with a contingency plan B.

■ **Discipline and time management:** Another principle you imbibe is to be action oriented, which avoids loss of time on unproductive activities. Discipline and time management is the key to success, whether in professional or personal life.

■ **Personality:** With diverse learning methods, an MBA course teaches the basics of communication such as active listening, body language, spoken and written communication. Additionally, you learn the importance of grooming and interpersonal relations.

■ **Attitude:** The most important aspect of management education is developing a positive attitude. With a positive attitude, you constantly strive to give your best, overcoming obstacles and getting ready for higher challenges. A positive attitude is therefore your master key to climb the success ladder.

So, if you are completing an undergraduate course shortly and thinking of what to do next, an MBA is easily one of the better options, as it not only gets you a job, but also prepares you to look at the bigger picture of life.

In short, life is like a classroom where you are being tested and tried. An MBA prepares you to get into the classroom and equips you to pass with distinction. (The writer is a management and career consultant)