

## 'Development beyond academics'

**Prof Ajit Parulekar, Goa Institute of Management (GIM)**

B-school education adds value through learning in the classroom and learning beyond the classroom. Listed below are a few ways in which a new student at a reputed B-school can make headway in each of the above areas:



### Learning in the classroom

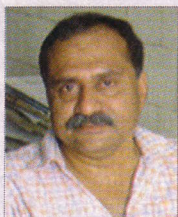
- Different educational background: Arts and biology graduates could experience difficulty in mathematics-oriented courses like operations research and engineers, with accounting. Make up for their handicaps through extra effort or by getting help from classmates and faculty.
- Most reputed B-schools employ an interactive pedagogy in which you can add value to your learning and to the class learning through participation in class.
- B-school classrooms comprise students from varied cultural, socio-economic and industry backgrounds (and sometimes varied age profiles too). Ability to appreciate this diversity and learn from it will help you broaden your perspectives.

### Learning beyond the classroom

- Follow events and happenings in the world of business and economy by reading financial newspapers, business publications and electronic media. This enables you to relate concepts discussed in class to the real business world.
- Carry classroom discussions beyond the classroom.
- Engage in interaction with faculty to get more out of the faculty beyond the class.
- Take the initiative in undertaking industry projects where the you can learn experientially and also test out applicability and validity of 'theoretical' concepts.
- Diversity on campus, campus culture, co-curricular and extracurricular activities (presentations, seminars and community events) are factors conducive to personal-ity enrichment.

## 'NO SITUATION PURELY FINANCIAL OR MARKETING'

**Prof CM Ramesh, GIM**



More often than not, in India, it is the young people who join management programmes. And they join them with an idea of working in a sector (say, finance). They believe that what they thus need to know well is the subject of finance. All else is deemed irrelevant. Further, most young people are interested in getting their first good job at placement. This means, a focus on preparing to answer questions at interviews well.

There is nothing wrong in such aims. The problem is that the associated beliefs about what needs to be learnt constrain high performance in one's career.

An 'MBA' programme in good institutes of management prepares students for a managerial career. The operative phrase here is 'managerial career'. A career is a series of assignments over a longish duration of time.

In the course of such a career, the

manager will come across a range of situations needing decisions and implementation. No situation comes as purely financial, or marketing or systems etc. Further, a very large part of management is about implementation. Also, in decisions, while the content of the decision matters, the process also matters a great deal for the health of the organisation. The point is that every manager, in whatsoever sector (or functional department of a company) needs to be well versed in the fundamentals of every 'subject' of management. For example, every manager has to recognise how his decisions affect the bottom line. In most decisions, there is a need to think through the implications for people, etc.

Therefore, the beliefs alluded to earlier (only some subjects matter, or what matters is preparing for the 1st job interview) are limiting. In other words, there is a tendency for young people to confuse jobs or sectors of work with 'subjects' of study.

This is the reason why MBA programmes have the 1st year as compulsory for all aspiring management graduates. In this 1st year, all 'subjects' are to be learnt well.

I believe therefore that it is this shift of perspective that is needed in a young MBA student. The earlier he/she gets this point, the more productive will be their learning.

## 'REAL WORLD RESEMBLES FOOTBALL'

**Venkat R Krishnan, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai**

The first few weeks

in a B-school are extremely crucial. Others' first impressions of us are lasting and they cloud their subsequent rational thinking, since human beings are rationalising rather than rational beings. The initial relationships that are formed tend to affect self-esteem, facilitate academic performance, and make the educational process more enjoyable.



There are two factors that can influence the process of making headway in the first few weeks in a B-school. The first factor is to understand the realities of the social world. We live in an interdependent world and the real world resembles football rather than golf; our success not only depends on how we perform, but it also depends on how others perform. Human skills are more useful than functional or technical skills. Considering that human beings are rationalising beings, focusing on understanding others' perspectives, prejudices and stereotypes is crucial. Ensuring that others have desired impressions of us (called impression management) pays rich dividends and cannot be ignored.

The second factor is to develop the skill of taking care of our interests: Waking up from inertia-addiction (putting up with everything); doing something rather than doing nothing; avoiding hypocrisy; replacing self-absorption with desire to influence others; spending time thinking about others than first about ourselves; dealing with others skillfully and strategically, never forgetting our goals; identifying friends and enemies and their strengths and weaknesses; building allies and always remembering our long-term interests, and using appropriate means to take care of those interests. ■