

## Admission Fiasco- A Case Of A Leading B-School In South India

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### The Macro Environment

It was 2012-13 academic year. Though global recession was identified by the advanced nations as early as 2008, we in India, in specific the policy makers were in a denial or delusion mode saying “India is decoupled”. But, the heat was felt by every sector, including higher education year after year.

The situation of the case was from ‘Blossoms Institute of Management’, a private B School<sup>1</sup>. Reckoning at the high volume of applications for PGDM, since 2005 or 2006 each B school existing in the market expanded their intake. Looking at the super normal profits made by the existing firms, sorry, B schools, more firms or schools got in to market. Whether it was because of the increase in supply (availability of PGDM seats) or decrease in the demand for PGDM, due to slowdown, the school felt the pinch. In the sense, the aspirants for the school were less in number compared to the intake they were permitted by the regulator.

### The Backdrop

The Founder and the Chief of the Institution convened a meeting related to admissions for that season, with all the faculty and executives. She communicated to all concerned of admissions department, not to dilute the quality of intake, in a race to fill all the permitted number of seats at the Institute. Prof. Govind, Director Academics, insisted that all prospective students of the Institute should go through a tough test of ability to communicate. And he wanted only, those students who perform well in Group discussion and Personal interview should be given admission. In defense of his decision, he quoted from Srikant M Datar’s *Rethinking the MBA - Business Education at a Crossroads*, that, the MBA students should be capable of thinking critically, decide wisely and communicate clearly and implement effectively. He also shared the concerns and opinions of Heads and Deans of global B Schools as quoted in the book, that,

*“Managing is a social process, and managers’ working life is a never ending series of contacts with other people. They must talk and listen, telephone, call meetings, plead, argue, negotiate. ...Unfortunately, MBAs are frequently weak in these areas. ... The ability to communicate is lacking. Students don’t know how to present in front of groups, nor how to express their concerns in a frank but non-aggressive way.”*

The Founder and the Chief of the Institution completely supported the decision of Prof. Govind, as she understood it well, that it will have an impact on placement of that batch and the admissions in the coming years.

### Different Ranks Different Perspectives

Though the employer openly said that, it is not necessary to fill all the seats, the Director, Admissions Department, Prof. Ram and his deputies were in the mode of filling all the seats available. Prof. Ram might be of the opinion and must have communicated to his team informally that management talks like this in the beginning and comments about the less number of admissions on a later date or shows it on performance appraisals and remunerations paid. May be by admitting more students he wanted to impress the management. There might have been another possibility too, that without the Chief of the Institution and Prof. Ram insisting on full strength of students, the executives of admissions department wanted to come out with a startle performance even in a slump year, to please Prof. Ram.

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<sup>1</sup> In India, in addition to IIMs and colleges affiliated to universities or run by universities, there are many Unaided - Private, Deemed University -Private Institutes, providing Management education. These Institutes called B Schools have more autonomy in framing and revising the syllabus according to the needs of the job market. They also have higher level of industry interaction. That makes them differentiated from other colleges. B Schools in India are approved by AICTE. AICTE is the regulator of Technical and Management Education in India.

It was like any day of that year's admission season. The prospective students were not reporting to the Institute at the scheduled time. They were reporting at their convenient time. Looking at the lack of seriousness or discipline of the prospective students, Director Academics, Prof. Govind quoting the words of the Chief of the Institution, told Dr. Rini Simon, faculty-in-charge of conducting Group Discussions (GD) and Personal Interviews (PI), that she should not conduct GD & PI for one or two prospective students, but should at least have 5 participants. He also insisted on a panel for conducting GD & PI of at least two faculty members, i.e., in addition to her, there should be one more member. Dr. Rini Simon accepted it and said that she will follow his instructions and proceeded for other tasks of the day.

### **The Apprehensions, Thoughts and Feeling of Wrong Doing**

Dr. Rini Simon received a call from the reception of her Institute while going out for lunch. The receptionist of the Institute informed her that Prof. Govind, Director Academics was calling her. She was going out for lunch that day and also planned for some shopping, may be extending the time taken for lunch. Receiving the call she was panic and without even thinking about her lunch took a 'U' turn to reach the Institute. Dr. Rini Simon was said to be a committed, frank and bold employee.

What made Dr. Rini Simon so worried, when she got a call from Prof. Govind's office was, she disobeyed his instruction. Within an hour, after he suggested her not to conduct selection process for one or two, she conducted a micro presentation, in the place of GD & PI. She also did it all alone, without another faculty being in the panel. She issued the provisional admission letter to the concerned student. Dr. Rini Simon actually was not ready to disobey the instructions of Prof. Govind or violate rules. But, Dr. Rini Simon did all this on the request of Dr. Lakshmi, Sr. Executive of Admissions.

Reaching the Institute, rather than going to Prof. Govind, she went to meet her colleague, Dr. Lakshmi. Requested her to come out of the class, and communicated that she was called by Prof. Govind. Dr. Rini Simon's problem and worry was that Dr. Govind may question her for her gross insubordination of his instruction, related to conduct of GD & PI and issue of admission letter to a student. After the conversation for few minutes helplessly Dr. Lakshmi asked Dr. Rini Simon to tell Dr. Govind that micro presentation was conducted and admission letter was issued as per the instructions of Dr. Lakshmi, Sr.Executive of Admissions Department. This relieved Dr. Rini Simon, to some extent and still with some apprehension she went to meet Prof. Govind.

### **Suggested student discussion questions**

- Bring out the vital OB/ HR issues from the case discussion.
- Who disobeyed? Who is at fault? Was there disobedience or Insubordination. Or was it a case of lack of Unity of command
- What must have happened in Prof. Govind's office? A memo / disciplinary action? Against whom?

### **Appendices:**

**Table 1: Number of B Schools (AICTE Approved Unaided - Private, Deemed University -Private Institutes), Offering PG course in Management Discipline, their Intake of Students, Enrollment of Students and Number of Faculty for Academic Years 2012-13 to 2017-2018**

| Year    | No. of Institutions | Intake of Students | Enrollment of Students | No. of Faculty |
|---------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| 2012-13 | 3087                | 390664             | 224341                 | 53848          |
| 2013-14 | 3488                | 429673             | 221741                 | 49000          |
| 2014-15 | 3333                | 433366             | 235995                 | 57301          |
| 2015-16 | 3207                | 411115             | 237749                 | 55832          |
| 2016-17 | 3087                | 390664             | 220028                 | 53848          |

|                                                                                                                                                                           |      |        |    |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------|----|-------|
| 2017-18                                                                                                                                                                   | 2985 | 371666 | NA | 52974 |
| Source: <a href="https://www.facilities.aicte-india.org/dashboard/pages/dashboarداicte.php">https://www.facilities.aicte-india.org/dashboard/pages/dashboarداicte.php</a> |      |        |    |       |

**Table 2: Expenditure on Education as part of Total Private Final Consumption Expenditure in India (Domestic Market)**

| Year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Total Expenditure on Education (Rs. in Crores) | It's share in Total Private Final Consumption Expenditure | Year on year Growth of Expenditure on Education |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 2011-12                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 182378                                         | 3.7                                                       |                                                 |
| 2012-13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 211685                                         | 3.7                                                       | 16.07                                           |
| 2013-14                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 237562                                         | 3.6                                                       | 12.22                                           |
| 2014-15                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 284745                                         | 3.9                                                       | 19.86                                           |
| Source: <a href="https://data.gov.in/resources/private-final-consumption-expenditure-domestic-market-current-prices-2011-12-2014-15">https://data.gov.in/resources/private-final-consumption-expenditure-domestic-market-current-prices-2011-12-2014-15</a> . Accessed on 13-04-2018 |                                                |                                                           |                                                 |
| Note: Calculations based on data from corresponding years                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                |                                                           |                                                 |
| 1 Crore = 10 Million                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                |                                                           |                                                 |

### Teaching Note

#### 1. Case Synopsis:

The Case Study is in the area of Organizational Behaviour (OB). The Case Study focuses issues like lack of proper organization structure, conflict of job description or overlapping job profiles, lack of proper instruction or multiplicity of commands, violation of – authority or hierarchy or instruction, insubordination, power and politics, guilt of wrongdoing, managing colleagues, dilemma of following instructions of a superior or compromising on responsibility to oblige a colleague to maintain friendship, or getting carried away by what colleagues say. The background is a higher education institution. The higher education sector is significant, in two aspects. Firstly, it is growing. India being one of the fastest growing large economy, and second most populous country, its higher education sector is also growing very fast. Secondly, it is going to shape the future of the country.

#### 2. Target Audience

Management students at post graduation level of both full-time and executive programs. It is of use in courses of Organisation Behaviour, Strategy and Business Ethics. In business schools in the western world, this can serve as a case illustrating entrepreneurial business strategy in emerging economies.

### REFERENCES

- AICTE data: <https://www.facilities.aicte-india.org/dashboard/pages/dashboarداicte.php>. Accessed on 12-04-2018
- MOSPI data: <https://data.gov.in/resources/private-final-consumption-expenditure-domestic-market-current-prices-2011-12-2014-15>. Accessed on 13-04-2018