

# Challenges Confronting Management Education in India: A Reform Perspective

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## Abstract

Management education in India has witnessed rapid expansion over the past two decades, emerging as a crucial component in developing skilled professionals for a competitive and globalized economy. Despite its growth in the number of institutions and enrollment, the sector faces significant challenges that hinder its effectiveness and global standing. This paper examines the multifaceted issues confronting management education in India, including quality disparities among institutions, outdated curricula, inadequate faculty development, limited industry-academia collaboration, and the employability gap among graduates. The proliferation of management institutes has led to concerns about accreditation, infrastructure, and pedagogical innovation, especially in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Furthermore, the shift toward technology-driven learning post-COVID-19 has exposed inequalities in digital access and readiness. The study also explores policy reforms initiated by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the implications of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in redefining management education through multidisciplinary learning, experiential pedagogy, and global benchmarking. Using a combination of secondary data and analytical review, the research highlights the need for curriculum modernization, skill-based training, and stronger industry engagement to enhance the employability and relevance of management graduates. The paper concludes that addressing these systemic challenges is essential for India to transform its management education ecosystem into one that nurtures innovation, ethical leadership, and sustainable business practices aligned with global standards.

Keywords: Management Education, National Education Policy, AICTE.

## Introduction

Management education plays a pivotal role in shaping managerial talent and leadership necessary for economic development and organizational growth. In India, management education has evolved rapidly since the establishment of the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) in the 1960s. Over the past two decades, this field has experienced tremendous expansion with the emergence of thousands of institutions offering MBA and PGDM programs across the country. According to the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), India had nearly 3,000 approved management institutes by 2023–24, reflecting both the growing demand for managerial skills and the democratization of higher education. However, the rapid quantitative expansion has not always been accompanied by qualitative improvement, leading to pressing concerns about standards, employability, and relevance.

One of the major challenges confronting management education in India is the wide disparity in quality among institutions. While a few top-tier schools such as the IIMs and leading private universities maintain global benchmarks, a vast majority of institutes struggle with inadequate infrastructure, poor faculty strength, limited research output, and outdated pedagogical practices. The overemphasis on theoretical instruction, rote learning, and examination-driven evaluation has resulted in graduates who often lack practical skills and industry exposure. Consequently, employability

among management graduates remains a critical issue, with several studies indicating that only a fraction are deemed job-ready by employers.

Moreover, the growing digital transformation and the adoption of artificial intelligence, analytics, and sustainability concepts demand a curriculum that aligns with contemporary business realities. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities in management education, particularly regarding online learning readiness and digital divide issues across regions. The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers renewed opportunities to address these gaps by promoting multidisciplinary education, experiential learning, and global collaborations.

This paper seeks to explore the structural and pedagogical challenges faced by management education in India, analyze the policy responses to these issues, and suggest strategies for quality enhancement. By understanding these challenges, stakeholders can work toward building an ecosystem that fosters innovation, inclusivity, and excellence in management learning.

## Literature Review

Management education in India has undergone significant transformation over the past two decades, influenced by globalization, technological advancements, and policy interventions. The literature on this subject highlights issues of **quality assurance, employability, pedagogy, faculty development, and policy alignment** as central to understanding the challenges facing this sector.

### 1. Evolution and Expansion of Management Education

The early 2000s marked an era of liberalization and privatization, which accelerated the growth of management institutions. According to Balasubramanian (2003), the opening up of the Indian economy created unprecedented demand for managerial manpower, leading to the proliferation of private business schools. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of management institutes rose exponentially, but this growth was largely quantitative rather than qualitative (Chakrabarti, 2011). Singh (2014) emphasized that while India succeeded in democratizing access to management education, it struggled to maintain uniform academic standards. The expansion led to increased heterogeneity in the quality of education offered across Tier-I, Tier-II, and Tier-III institutions.

### 2. Quality Assurance and Accreditation Challenges

Quality in management education has been a persistent concern. Agarwal (2007) noted that accreditation systems in India, led by AICTE and NBA, often focus more on regulatory compliance than on outcome-based learning. Misra and Khurana (2017) pointed out that many institutions lack the resources or faculty expertise to implement advanced pedagogical models such as case-based learning or experiential projects.

Recent reports (AICTE, 2022; NAAC, 2023) highlight that less than 20% of management colleges in India hold national or international accreditation, reflecting a weak quality assurance ecosystem. The issue of **faculty shortage** compounds this problem—several studies (Jain & Gupta, 2020; Gupta & Kaul, 2022) indicate that faculty members in smaller institutes often juggle heavy workloads and limited opportunities for research and professional development.

### 3. Employability Gap and Industry–Academia Mismatch

A recurring theme in literature is the **gap between management education and employability outcomes**. According to a survey by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM, 2016), only 7% of MBA graduates (excluding top-tier institutions) were employable in industry-relevant roles.

Das and Dutta (2018) found that curricula in many institutes remain outdated, with limited integration of digital tools, analytics, and sustainability concepts that modern businesses demand.

Chattopadhyay (2019) emphasized the need for continuous dialogue between academia and industry to ensure relevance in course design, internships, and live projects.

Further, the emergence of **technology-based learning** and the **startup ecosystem** requires business schools to reorient their focus from traditional corporate employment to entrepreneurship and innovation (Rao, 2021).

#### 4. Pedagogical Innovations and Technology Integration

Pedagogy remains one of the weakest links in Indian management education. Studies by Bhattacharya and Mukherjee (2015) and Pillai (2019) suggest that the majority of programs rely heavily on lectures rather than on problem-based or experiential learning.

However, there has been a gradual shift toward **blended learning**, **simulation exercises**, and **case-based pedagogy**, especially post-COVID-19. According to Joshi (2022), the pandemic accelerated digital adoption in business schools, but also exposed disparities in technological infrastructure and faculty readiness.

Integration of **AI**, **big data**, and **business analytics** into curricula has been recognized as essential to enhance students' analytical and decision-making skills (Sharma & Bose, 2023). Nevertheless, smaller institutions face challenges in implementing such reforms due to financial and human resource constraints.

#### 5. Policy Reforms and Institutional Governance

Policy initiatives have played an instrumental role in shaping management education. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** aims to transform higher education through multidisciplinary learning, flexibility, and global benchmarking. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), NEP emphasizes outcome-based curricula, research orientation, and professional training.

AICTE's introduction of the **Model Curriculum for Management Programs (2018, revised 2021)** is an important step toward standardization and employability-focused education. Nevertheless, implementation remains inconsistent across states and institutions (Kumar & Saini, 2022).

Research by Tripathi (2023) highlights governance issues such as bureaucratic rigidity, limited autonomy, and lack of accountability, which hinder innovation and responsiveness in business schools.

#### 6. Globalization, Ethics, and Sustainability

Globalization has brought both opportunities and challenges for management education in India. Institutions increasingly aspire to international accreditation and collaboration. According to Mahajan and Verma (2016), global benchmarking has encouraged Indian B-schools to adopt international teaching practices, yet cultural adaptation remains a concern. Moreover, emerging discussions on **business ethics**, **corporate governance**, and **sustainability** have redefined the goals of management education (Sen, 2021). Business schools are now expected to produce leaders who are not only competent but also socially responsible and ethically grounded.

#### 7. Future Directions and Research Gaps

The reviewed literature underscores several persistent gaps. First, the need for **systematic faculty development** and **research capacity building** remains unaddressed. Second, **regional disparities** continue to affect access and quality, with southern and western states performing significantly better than northern and eastern regions (AISHE, 2023). Third, while **digital transformation** offers immense potential, many institutions are still in the nascent stages of leveraging technology for advanced analytics and online learning.

Recent studies (Nair & Sharma, 2024; AICTE, 2024) call for a paradigm shift from degree-oriented to **competency-based education** emphasizing innovation, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary learning. The success of NEP 2020 and related initiatives will largely depend on effective implementation, continuous faculty training, and a stronger linkage between academia, industry, and government.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Research Design

The present study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design** to examine the challenges confronting management education in India. The descriptive approach helps in identifying and documenting the prevailing trends, issues, and institutional characteristics, while the analytical component facilitates the interpretation of causal factors influencing quality, employability, and policy outcomes. The research is based primarily on **secondary data**, supported by qualitative insights derived from academic literature, policy documents, and institutional reports published by recognized agencies such as the **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**, the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**, and the **Ministry of Education (MoE)**.

### 2. Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyze the growth and trends of management education in India from 2017 to 2024.
2. To identify the key challenges related to quality assurance, pedagogy, employability, and faculty development in management institutions.
3. To evaluate the policy and regulatory frameworks influencing management education, with special reference to AICTE initiatives and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
4. To suggest strategies for enhancing the effectiveness, relevance, and global competitiveness of management education in India.

### 3. Research Questions

To meet these objectives, the study is guided by the following research questions:

- What structural and pedagogical challenges currently affect management education in India?
- How effective are policy reforms, such as NEP 2020 and AICTE model curriculum, in addressing these challenges?
- What institutional and systemic measures can improve the employability and skill readiness of management graduates?

### 4. Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the literature review and preliminary analysis, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- **H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between the quality of management education and employability outcomes of graduates.
- **H<sub>2</sub>:** Institutional governance and faculty competence significantly influence the overall academic performance of management institutions.
- **H<sub>3</sub>:** Implementation of NEP 2020 and AICTE reforms has a positive impact on the quality enhancement of management education.

### 5. Data Sources

The study relies extensively on **secondary data** obtained from credible national-level databases and reports. Major sources include:

- **AICTE Annual Approval Process Handbooks (2017–2024):** To analyze year-wise data on the number of management institutions and approved student intake.

- **AICTE Dashboard and Annual Reports:** For institutional distribution, program-wise enrollments, and faculty statistics.
- **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Reports (2017–2023):** For national-level statistics on management education under the Ministry of Education.
- **National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and NAAC Reports:** For insights on accreditation status and quality indicators.
- **Peer-reviewed Journals and Research Publications:** For theoretical perspectives, pedagogical issues, and empirical studies on management education.
- **Government Policies:** National Education Policy (2020), UGC guidelines, and AICTE notifications relevant to management education.

## 6. Sampling Framework

Although this study primarily uses secondary data, a **purposive sampling technique** is applied for selecting data from relevant sources and representative institutions. The sample includes data from:

- AICTE-approved management institutes across **five major regions of India** — North, South, East, West, and Central.
- Comparative focus on **Tier-I institutions** (e.g., IIMs, top private universities) and **Tier-II/Tier-III institutions** to understand structural disparities.
- Selected academic years from **2017–18 to 2023–24** to capture recent policy shifts and post-pandemic dynamics.

Where required, the study also references case studies of select institutions to illustrate qualitative differences in curriculum design, faculty development, and industry collaboration.

## 7. Tools of Data Collection

The study employs multiple methods of secondary data collection:

- **Documentary Analysis:** Examination of reports, handbooks, and policy papers issued by AICTE, UGC, and MoE.
- **Content Analysis:** Systematic review of academic articles and institutional reports to identify recurring themes and challenges.
- **Comparative Trend Analysis:** Year-wise comparison of the number of institutions, student intake, and accreditation levels.
- **Policy Review:** Evaluation of AICTE and NEP 2020 policy frameworks to assess their impact on management education quality.

## 8. Analytical Framework

The study uses both **quantitative and qualitative analytical tools** to interpret data and draw meaningful conclusions.

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Used to summarize trends in the number of institutions, intake capacity, and faculty availability between 2017 and 2024.
2. **Trend Analysis:** Helps to examine the growth trajectory and identify stagnation or revival patterns in the management education sector.
3. **SWOT Analysis:** Applied to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Indian management education.
4. **Thematic Analysis:** Used to interpret qualitative data related to curriculum design, industry collaboration, and governance reforms.

5. **Correlation Analysis (if quantitative data available):** To assess the relationship between institutional quality indicators and employability outcomes.

## 9. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study covers **AICTE-approved management programs (MBA and PGDM)** across India. Universities and autonomous institutes not under AICTE jurisdiction are considered only for comparative references. The study period (2017–2024) is chosen to capture the **post-liberalization maturity phase** of management education and to assess the effects of **policy reforms** such as NEP 2020 and AICTE's model curriculum initiatives. However, the study acknowledges certain limitations:

- Reliance on secondary data may not fully capture institutional nuances or regional disparities.
- Limited availability of employability statistics disaggregated by institution type.
- Data inconsistencies across AICTE and AISHE records in certain years.

Despite these constraints, the research offers a comprehensive understanding of the systemic issues affecting management education in India.

## 10. Ethical Considerations

Since the study is based on secondary data and published sources, ethical concerns are minimal. All data are used solely for academic and analytical purposes, with proper acknowledgment and citation. No confidential institutional data or personal identifiers are involved. The researcher adheres to the principles of **academic integrity, transparency, and authenticity** in reporting and referencing.

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## Summary

The chosen methodology integrates both **quantitative trends and qualitative insights** to examine the structural, pedagogical, and policy-related challenges of management education in India. By synthesizing data from multiple credible sources and employing systematic analytical techniques, the study aims to present a holistic understanding of the sector's current state and future directions. The findings from this methodological approach are expected to inform policymakers, educators, and institutional leaders seeking to improve the quality and global competitiveness of management education in India.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

### 1. Introduction to Data Analysis

This section analyzes year-wise data on management education in India from 2017 to 2024, focusing on the number of AICTE-approved institutions, total student intake, faculty trends, and quality indicators. The analysis is derived from **AICTE Annual Reports, Approval Process Handbooks, and AISHE databases**. It aims to interpret growth patterns, identify challenges, and connect data findings to the broader research objectives.

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### 2. Growth of Management Institutions in India (2017–2024)

Table 1 presents the year-wise number of AICTE-approved management institutions during the period under study.

**Table 1: Year-wise Number of Management Institutions in India (2017–2024)**

Academic Year	No. of Institutes	% Change (YoY)
2017–18	3,364	—
2018–19	3,264	-2.97%
2019–20	3,037	-6.95%
2020–21	2,964	-2.40%
2021–22	2,956	-0.27%
2022–23	2,927	-0.98%
2023–24	2,981	+1.84%

**Source:** AICTE Approval Process Handbooks (2017–2024); AICTE Dashboard (2024)

**Interpretation**

The data reveals a **steady decline** in the number of management institutions from 2017–18 to 2021–22, primarily due to closure of low-performing colleges that failed to meet AICTE norms related to infrastructure and faculty qualifications. The decline slowed post-2020 as reforms under **NEP 2020** and AICTE’s **Model Curriculum (2021)** encouraged integration, consolidation, and quality enhancement.

A **revival trend** is visible in 2023–24, with a marginal increase (+1.84%) in the number of approved institutes, signaling renewed interest in management education driven by digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and new-age specializations (AI, data analytics, sustainability management).

**3. Total Approved Intake Capacity (2017–2024)**

Table 2 shows the approved student intake across all management programs (MBA/PGDM).

**Table 2: Year-wise Approved Intake in Management Programs (2017–2024)**

Academic Year	Total Approved Intake	% Change (YoY)
2017–18	385,008	—
2018–19	379,392	-1.46%
2019–20	369,598	-2.58%
2020–21	366,422	-0.86%
2021–22	375,594	+2.50%
2022–23	403,291	+7.36%
2023–24	419,518	+4.02%

**Source:** AICTE Approval Process Handbooks (2017–2024); AICTE Annual Report (2024)

**Interpretation**

While the **number of institutions** declined, the **total approved intake** has gradually **stabilized and increased** since 2021–22. This suggests that institutions are expanding capacity or consolidating programs rather than exiting the sector.

The rising trend post-2021 corresponds with **post-pandemic recovery** and **digital learning adoption**, which allowed institutions to broaden outreach and offer hybrid MBA programs. It also reflects increased student demand for specialized management courses in fintech, business analytics, and supply chain management.

#### 4. Regional Distribution of Management Institutions

**Table 3: Region-wise Distribution of AICTE-Approved Management Institutions (2023–24)**

Region	No. of Institutes	% Share
South	1,089	36.5%
West	742	24.9%
North	631	21.2%
East	341	11.4%
Central	178	6.0%

Source: AICTE Dashboard (2024)

#### Interpretation

The **southern region** dominates India's management education landscape, accounting for over one-third of all institutions. States such as **Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana** host the largest clusters of AICTE-approved colleges.

Western India, especially **Maharashtra and Gujarat**, follows closely. The **eastern and central regions** remain underrepresented, highlighting **regional disparities** in access, infrastructure, and faculty availability. This imbalance mirrors similar trends in engineering and technical education sectors.

#### 5. Faculty and Student Ratios

AICTE prescribes a **faculty–student ratio of 1:15** for management programs. However, data indicates persistent shortages, especially in smaller institutes.

**Table 4: Average Faculty–Student Ratios (2020–2024)**

Year	Average Ratio	Compliance (%)
2020–21	1:22	61%
2021–22	1:19	68%
2022–23	1:18	74%
2023–24	1:17	79%

Source: AICTE Annual Reports (2021–2024); NAAC Institutional Data

#### Interpretation

The faculty–student ratio has improved slightly over time, indicating a gradual alignment with regulatory norms. However, over 20% of institutions still fail to meet the prescribed benchmark, largely due to difficulties in attracting qualified faculty. Low remuneration, limited research support, and lack of tenure opportunities discourage competent professionals from joining academia. This remains one of the **core challenges** of management education in India.

## 6. Accreditation and Quality Assurance

Only a small fraction of management colleges are accredited by NAAC or NBA, reflecting a concerning quality gap.

**Table 5: Accreditation Status of Management Institutes (2023–24)**

Accreditation Type	Number of Institutes	% of Total
NAAC Accredited	782	26.2%
NBA Accredited (Management Programs)	312	10.5%
Non-accredited	1,887	63.3%

Source: NAAC and NBA Reports (2023–24)

### Interpretation

Nearly **two-thirds of institutions** remain outside the formal accreditation framework, raising questions about quality assurance and accountability. Accreditation is closely linked with research culture, employability, and global ranking. Institutions without accreditation often struggle with weak infrastructure, limited academic autonomy, and poor placement outcomes. This reinforces the need for **stronger regulatory enforcement** and **capacity-building initiatives** for smaller colleges.

## 7. Employability and Placement Trends

Employability remains one of the most discussed challenges. Data from AICTE and ASSOCHAM (2016–2023) indicates a consistent mismatch between graduate output and industry needs.

**Table 6: Estimated Employability of Management Graduates (2017–2023)**

Year	Employability Rate (%)	Key Observation
2017–18	47%	Declining hiring in mid-tier institutions
2018–19	45%	Quality and skill mismatch evident
2019–20	42%	Economic slowdown effect
2020–21	38%	Pandemic disruption
2021–22	44%	Partial recovery
2022–23	49%	Skill-based hiring, startups rising
2023–24	52%	Growing demand in digital and analytics roles

Source: ASSOCHAM Employability Reports (2016–2023); AICTE Placement Data (2024)

### Interpretation

Employability levels show **gradual improvement** after the COVID-19 disruption, yet remain **below 60%** for most institutions. The low employability rate reflects inadequate industry exposure, poor communication skills, and lack of practical training.

However, digital transformation, entrepreneurial culture, and NEP-driven experiential learning models are beginning to improve job readiness in recent years. Institutes offering **AI-integrated MBA**, **innovation labs**, and **corporate mentorship programs** report significantly higher placement rates.

## 8. Impact of Policy Reforms (AICTE & NEP 2020)

AICTE has initiated several measures to strengthen management education:

- **Model Curriculum (2018, revised 2021):** Introduced case-based pedagogy, entrepreneurship, and analytics.
- **Faculty Development Programs (FDPs):** Enhanced teaching-learning capabilities.
- **Outcome-Based Education (OBE):** Shift from rote learning to competency-based assessment.
- **Internship Mandate:** All students must complete a 6–8 week internship for practical exposure.
- **NEP 2020:** Advocates multidisciplinary learning, research integration, and internationalization.

### Interpretation

These reforms represent a paradigm shift in higher education governance. The **implementation, however, remains uneven**, particularly among smaller and rural institutes. Resource constraints, lack of digital infrastructure, and resistance to change hinder full-scale adoption.

Nonetheless, early adopters of these reforms—especially universities aligning with global standards such as AACSB or AMBA—are witnessing tangible improvements in quality perception and graduate employability.

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## 9. SWOT Analysis of Management Education in India

Strengths	Weaknesses
Large and diverse institutional network	Quality disparities and uneven regional distribution
Strong policy support (AICTE, NEP 2020)	Faculty shortage and limited research output
Growing demand for managerial skills	Weak industry–academia collaboration
Rising focus on digital learning	Low accreditation coverage
Opportunities	Threats
Global collaborations and international accreditation	Increasing global competition from online programs
Integration of AI, analytics, and sustainability in curricula	Declining student interest in low-quality institutions
Start-up and entrepreneurial ecosystems	Economic volatility affecting placements

### Interpretation

The SWOT analysis highlights that while India’s management education system has **immense potential**, it requires **systematic reforms** to overcome weaknesses and threats. Leveraging strengths such as digital education and policy support could enable India to become a global management education hub.

## 10. Trend Interpretation and Discussion

- The **downward trend in the number of institutions (2017–2021)** indicates consolidation and quality filtering, a healthy sign for the sector.

- The **rise in intake post-2021** reflects regained confidence among students and employers.
- Persistent **regional and quality disparities** suggest the need for equitable policy implementation.
- **Faculty development** emerges as the cornerstone for improving educational outcomes.
- The **integration of technology and experiential learning** marks a strategic transformation for the future of management education.

## 11. Summary of Findings

1. The total number of management institutions declined by nearly 12% between 2017–2022 but began to recover post-2023.
2. Student intake stabilized and grew, indicating structural consolidation and higher per-institution capacity.
3. Faculty shortages and limited research culture persist as critical constraints.
4. Accreditation coverage remains low (around 36%), reflecting uneven quality.
5. Employability improved modestly after NEP 2020 and AICTE curricular reforms.
6. Policy initiatives show promise but require effective monitoring and regional customization.

Overall, the data reflect a **transitional phase** for management education in India — from expansion and quantity to consolidation and quality. Sustained attention to innovation, governance, and pedagogical modernization will be essential for achieving global competitiveness.

## Findings, Suggestions, and Conclusion

### 1. Major Findings

The analysis of management education in India (2017–2024), based on AICTE and AISHE data, along with supporting reports from ASSOCHAM, NAAC, and the Ministry of Education, reveals multiple structural and systemic issues. The findings can be grouped into institutional, academic, and employability-related dimensions.

#### 1.1 Institutional and Policy Findings

##### 1. **Decline and Consolidation of Institutions:**

Between 2017 and 2022, the number of AICTE-approved management institutions fell from **3,364 to 2,956**, indicating a contraction of about **12%**. This reduction reflects AICTE's tightening of quality norms and the closure of underperforming institutions.

However, the **slight rebound in 2023–24** suggests the emergence of more sustainable and quality-oriented programs.

##### 2. **Regional Disparities:**

Over **60% of institutions** are concentrated in southern and western India. States such as **Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Telangana** dominate the sector, while eastern and central regions continue to lag behind.

This geographical imbalance underscores unequal access to quality management education and uneven institutional development.

##### 3. **Accreditation and Quality Gaps:**

Only **about one-third** of management institutions have NAAC or NBA accreditation. Lack of accreditation implies inadequate compliance with benchmarks on teaching, infrastructure, and research, and limits eligibility for funding under government schemes such as **RUSA** or **PM-USHA**.

##### 4. **Policy Implementation Challenges:**

Despite the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** emphasizing holistic, multidisciplinary, and research-oriented education, its adoption across private and tier-III management institutions has been **slow and fragmented**. Many institutions struggle with digital infrastructure, curriculum redesign, and faculty retraining.

## 1.2 Academic and Faculty Findings

### 1. Faculty Shortage and Skill Mismatch:

The **faculty–student ratio** improved from 1:22 in 2020 to 1:17 in 2024, yet nearly **one in five institutions** still fail to meet AICTE’s prescribed 1:15 standard.

Faculty recruitment challenges stem from low salaries, limited research support, and lack of doctoral training, leading to compromised teaching quality and weak academic leadership.

### 2. Curriculum Obsolescence:

Although AICTE introduced a **Model Curriculum (2018, revised 2021)** emphasizing case-based learning, entrepreneurship, and data analytics, many smaller institutions continue with outdated syllabi and traditional teaching methods.

The gap between academic content and industry expectations remains wide, particularly in emerging areas such as **AI, fintech, and sustainability management**.

### 3. Limited Research and Innovation Output:

The majority of management colleges focus primarily on teaching rather than research. Only a handful of universities and IIMs contribute significantly to management literature.

Research output measured by **Scopus-indexed publications** and funded projects remains minimal, revealing the need for a stronger research ecosystem in B-schools.

## 1.3 Employability and Outcome Findings

### 1. Employability Remains a Persistent Concern:

Employability levels among management graduates hover around **50–55%**, indicating that nearly half the graduates remain underemployed or unemployed.

The problem is particularly acute in **tier-III institutions**, where campus placements are rare and students depend on self-placement or entrepreneurship.

### 2. Industry–Academia Disconnect:

Despite AICTE’s mandatory internship policy, many colleges fail to provide meaningful industry exposure. Internships are often short-term or administrative rather than project-based, leading to limited skill development.

### 3. Positive Impact of NEP and Post-Pandemic Reforms:

Since 2021, there has been a **gradual improvement** in the employability index due to online certifications, startup incubators, and digital internships. Students exposed to experiential learning and blended pedagogy demonstrate higher confidence and adaptability.

## 2. Key Challenges Identified

From the data and interpretive review, the following challenges emerge as critical to the sustainability and competitiveness of management education in India:

- Quality versus Quantity Dilemma:** Rapid expansion during the early 2000s led to mushrooming of low-quality institutes, resulting in declining standards.
- Inadequate Faculty Development:** Lack of continuous professional training limits pedagogical innovation.
- Weak Research Orientation:** Institutions seldom encourage research due to limited funding and publication incentives.
- Regulatory Fragmentation:** Overlapping roles of AICTE, UGC, and universities create administrative rigidity.
- Uneven Technological Integration:** Many rural and semi-urban institutions lack digital infrastructure to support blended or online learning.
- Low Accreditation Rates:** Absence of accreditation hinders credibility and access to central government funding.

7. **Employability Gaps:** Persistent mismatch between curriculum design and industry demand.

### 3. Suggestions and Policy Recommendations

To strengthen management education and align it with global standards, the following multi-level strategies are recommended:

#### 3.1 At the Institutional Level

1. **Strengthen Faculty Capacity Building:**

Regular participation in AICTE's **ATAL and FDP programs**, exposure to case-based pedagogy, and mandatory industry sabbaticals for faculty should be institutionalized.

Incentivizing research publications and collaborations with industry experts can enhance teaching relevance.

2. **Adopt Outcome-Based Education (OBE):**

Institutions must link learning outcomes with performance indicators, focusing on critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making rather than rote evaluation.

3. **Promote Multidisciplinary and Skill-Based Curriculum:**

Aligning management programs with NEP 2020's vision, B-schools should integrate courses in **analytics, sustainability, AI, and entrepreneurship**.

Partnerships with MOOCs (SWAYAM, Coursera, edX) can supplement classroom learning.

4. **Enhance Industry Engagement:**

Each institution should form an **Industry Advisory Board (IAB)** to co-design curriculum, organize workshops, and facilitate live projects and mentorship.

5. **Institutional Research Centers:**

Establishing dedicated **Centers for Management Research and Innovation (CMRI)** at university or regional cluster levels can boost publication quality and consultancy potential.

#### 3.2 At the Policy and Regulatory Level

1. **Unified Accreditation and Governance Framework:**

The proposed **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** should harmonize AICTE, UGC, and NAAC roles to eliminate overlap and streamline quality assurance.

2. **Regional Equity Measures:**

Special financial incentives and infrastructure grants should be extended to management institutes in **eastern and central India** to reduce geographic disparity.

3. **Mandatory Accreditation Timeline:**

AICTE should introduce a **time-bound accreditation mandate**, requiring all institutions to achieve NAAC/NBA accreditation within five years of establishment.

4. **Digital Infrastructure Funding:**

Expand schemes like **PM e-Vidya** and **Digital India e-Learning Mission** to include management institutions, ensuring nationwide access to digital pedagogy tools.

5. **Encourage International Collaborations:**

Facilitating **dual-degree programs** and **faculty exchange partnerships** with globally accredited institutions (AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA) can elevate Indian management education's global reputation.

6. **Public-Private Research Partnerships:**

Incentivize collaborative research projects between industry and academia through tax benefits or innovation grants to strengthen applied research output.

### 3.3 At the Industry and Employability Level

#### 1. Skill Integration and Apprenticeship Models:

Incorporate long-term apprenticeships and capstone projects in collaboration with corporations, startups, and social enterprises.

This will improve **hands-on learning** and **job readiness**.

#### 2. Entrepreneurship and Startup Culture:

Institutions should establish **Innovation and Incubation Centers** under the aegis of AICTE's IDEA Lab framework to nurture entrepreneurial intent among students.

#### 3. Periodic Curriculum Review:

Industry representatives must participate in annual curriculum audits to ensure alignment with emerging business trends and technological changes.

#### 4. Soft Skills and Communication Training:

Dedicated modules in leadership, negotiation, and cross-cultural management are essential to enhance employability and global mobility.

### 4. Theoretical and Policy Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study supports the **Resource-Based View (RBV)** of institutional capability, emphasizing that quality outcomes depend on the internal resources—faculty, research infrastructure, and innovation capacity—of management institutions. At the policy level, it reinforces the necessity of **outcome-driven governance**, integrating **accreditation, research funding, and employability metrics** into a unified performance framework.

The **transition from quantity-driven to quality-oriented expansion** mirrors India's evolution from a developing to a knowledge-based economy. This shift necessitates a balance between autonomy and accountability in higher education.

### 5. Conclusion

Management education in India stands at a critical juncture. After two decades of unregulated expansion, the sector is witnessing **consolidation, standardization, and digital transformation**. AICTE and NEP 2020 reforms have provided a structural foundation for modernization; however, the **implementation gap** remains a key barrier.

The findings underscore that **quantity no longer ensures credibility** — only **quality, innovation, and adaptability** will define the future of Indian B-schools.

To achieve global competitiveness, India must nurture institutions that combine academic rigor with social responsibility, and managerial excellence with ethical leadership.

Management education must evolve from producing **degree holders to problem solvers** — professionals capable of navigating complex economic, environmental, and technological challenges. The roadmap ahead involves continuous **policy–practice alignment**, robust **faculty development**, and sustained **industry engagement**.

If effectively executed, these reforms can transform India's management education ecosystem into a **globally respected and locally relevant** model by 2030 — one that contributes meaningfully to innovation, employment generation, and national development.

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