

## Keynote Address

### Executive Learning, Education and Development: An Indian Scenario Scan



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**Salutation...**

*"THE concept and practice of life-long employment is changing to life-long employability the world over. While this changeover has been rapid in certain countries and industries, it is relatively slow in many others. In many ways, this changeover has been slow in India. But importantly, the new concept is fast gaining wide currency in the country in circles that matter."*<sup>1</sup>

These were the opening lines of an article titled: "*Setting New Rules for the Managers of Tomorrow*" that I had authored and which appeared in the Indian Financial Daily *The Hindu Business Line*. It is a sheer coincidence, but certainly a pleasant one indeed, considering that today, to this enlightened audience, I have chosen to share my thoughts on the theme of *Executive Learning, Education and Development*, that the above article appeared in print exactly on another 29<sup>th</sup> of November, that is, in 2001.

In that article, I had opined that in the changeover from life-long employment to life-long employability, "the negatives have often been more highlighted than the positives," which has made most people to forget that "life-long employability can not only lead to life-long employment, but can also inspire the individual to continuously learn and acquire new skills that enable her/him to be in control of the situation. It also motivates organizations to invest continuously in the upgradation of their people's attitudes, knowledge and skills; otherwise recruitment costs could mount prohibitively high and employee commitment could waver." And, needless to add, the article emphasized (probably the obvious): "HRD managers play the most crucial role here in operationalizing a judicious mix of continuous learning initiatives for their staff and managers."

A decade plus have passed since I had expressed those thoughts. In the meanwhile, the world, not sparing our region as well, went through a severe economic recession, where we also saw some firms of sky high repute collapse and disappear; and technology, particularly the internet - social media, and communications - smart phones, make intense inroads into our lives, also bringing in large scale changes in the way we organize, manage, market, interact and learn. On the 'learning' front, that includes the 'executive learning' space too, there have been path breaking openings, the most prominent being many open course wares, in particular the MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Simultaneously, the notion of 'Organizational Commitment,' the mortar that cemented life-long employment in modern organizations, not only has become weak but even redundant and old fashioned as well in a world that 'googles' (for anything and everything) and 'facebooks' (as the single stop panacea for all needs and issues of relationship and expression) - where competencies and

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<sup>1</sup> Nair, K. Unnikrishnan. "Setting new rules for the managers of tomorrow." *The Hindu Business Line* (Financial Daily from *The Hindu* Group of Publications), Thursday, Nov. 29, 2001. Accessed from <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2001/11/29/stories/12297701.htm>, on 09 Nov 2014.

commitment to value creating contributions are what matter, no matter who you are and which organization you work for.

While some of these statements could be towards the extreme, and the reality far removed in many corners of the world, including our own, we have also been experiencing the heat and pressure. The need to continuously learn, and learn relevantly, i.e., the learning that has direct and immediate convertibility to Rupees or Dollars for the organizations to which we belong, have become unavoidable for most managers. Educators and educational institutions, trainers and their outfits, and consultants and consulting firms have seized upon this need and opportunity.

In the rest of this address, I briefly look at the canvas of *executive learning* under two separate headings: of *Learning and Development*, and of *Education*. In this endeavour, my focus would be India - also as advised by Professor Hemantha Kottawatta, that: "Indian context also is good to share with our HR Professionals."<sup>2</sup> And, I did look at the websites of some of the leading Sri Lankan Universities as well, their Management Departments; but I am sure you would know about them and their academic pursuits more than I do, and we can take up any suitable discussion and exchange of views anytime while we are together here in this *Dialogue* or later on as well.

Before I proceed further, I would also like to say that, my purpose in this Talk is to share some of my observations, experiences, views, assessments and inferences about Executive Learning and Education in India. For this, I would naturally need to refer to and/or quote from some of the leading Management Institutions/B-Schools there, *as relevant and convenient for this Talk*. But that in no way means that the Institutions I refer to in this Talk are the only leading B-Schools in India, or that some of the leading B-Schools which don't find a mention in my Talk are less important or not prominent. An easy/quick reference for the listeners and readers of this Talk who wish to know more about Management Institutions and B-Schools in India could be the annual B-School Rankings published by leading Indian Business Magazines such as *Business Today*, *Business India* and others; and from there, one can move on to the websites of individual Institutions.

## **A. Executive Learning & Development**

### **01. The Beginnings**

"We have "#abc"[training] man-days to fill in the coming year, how many can you?," asked a letter that, I, as the Chairperson of the Management (Executive) Development Programmes (MDPs) of our Institute, had received at the turn of this century. As some of you would know, ours is one of the IIMs (Indian Institute of Management), the leading Management Institutes in India. That letter was from a Public Sector Unit (PSU), the mainstay of traditional Indian economy.

While that letter and many similar others, would summarize and convey the truth about Executive Training as approached by many companies in India traditionally, the history of Executive Training is a reasonably rich one in India in the last 50 years, ever since the first IIMs (Indian Institute of Management), were opened at Calcutta (IIMC) and Ahmedabad (IIMA).<sup>3</sup> Indeed the first set of courses to start at IIMA were the executive training

<sup>2</sup> Invitation email dt. 21 Oct 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Currently there are 13 IIMs in India, and about 5 more are being set up. Each IIM is known by the name of the City where it is located, with the first letter of the City's name attached to the three letters IIM. Hence the IIM at Ahmedabad is IIMA, at Bangalore is IIMB, at Calcutta is IIMC, and so on. In this paper, wherever essential, I follow the same notation.

programmes and not the regular MBA. The purposes behind such a choice was twofold: to meet the managerial training needs of Indian managers at that time, and to simultaneously develop the competency and confidence of Faculty to effectively design and rigorously conduct the two year full time MBA Course; as clearly stated in the Institute's brochure, titled: '*Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad: India's Iconic Management School, 1961-2011*.'<sup>4</sup>

"The very first public event organised by IIMA, even before the campus became fully functional, was the '3-Tier Programme.' This general management programme exposed Indian managers from the middle, senior, and top levels in the same organizations in quick sequence to modern professional practices. The aim was to prepare the whole organisation for transformation when few organizations, working in a government-controlled economy, realised the need for professional management. It also helped the Institute understand organisational dynamics in the country at close quarters and design the PGP curriculum appropriately."

"It was a deliberate decision to begin the academic activities at IIMA with an Executive Education Programme (EEP);"re-emphasizes the introductory paragraph on IIMA's current Executive Education Programmes webpage.<sup>5</sup>

## 02. Programme Types

### a. Open Programmes

Traditionally, the "Open Programmes" formed the core of training offerings from the IIMs and other leading Management Institutions like the Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI) Jamshedpur and Management Development Institute (MDI) Gurgaon. Even today, these Institutes and similar others do continue to offer numerous Open Programmes. For instance, across the IIMs at Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Kozhikode, and XLRI and MDI, the Open Programme Offerings of short duration (3 to 6 or 7 days) for the academic year 2014-15 average around 70 plus; and it is around 45 plus for the IIMs at Calcutta, Lucknow and Indore. Among the newer set of IIMs that have come up in the last five years too, the open programme offerings have been an essential consideration in and component of their strategic orientation, and appears to be in the range of around 10 to 20. A quick glance at these open programme listings for 2014-15 show a number of interesting aspects, some of which (by no means exhaustive) are:

1. There are both management functional-discipline based Programmes (on Strategy, Operations, HR, OB, Finance, Marketing, and so on); and Sectoral Programmes (such as in Health, Education, and Energy/Power).
2. A number of programmes, quite understandably, revolve around time tested and familiar themes and topics such as leadership, communication, interpersonal/communication skills, negotiations, finance for non-finance managers, project management, sales force performance, and so on.
3. Needless to say, among the most common themes for Open Programmes is *Leadership*; which is often seen coupled with themes such as change management, communication skill, conflict resolution and teambuilding/effectiveness. We also see a not so common combination such as Business Leadership & Law(IIMA); and while themes/terms such as

<sup>4</sup>*Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad: India's Iconic Management School, 1961-2011*. Institute Brochure, available at <<http://www.iimahd.ernet.in/institute/institutebrochure.html>>, accessed on 10 Nov 2014.

<sup>5</sup>*Executive Education: Transforming to Lead*. <http://www.iimahd.ernet.in/executive-education.html>, accessed on 10 Nov 2014.

- (Leading) *Responsibly* and (Leadership) *Coaching* and *Clinic* are now seen, there are also catchy titles such as 'Leading with Joy: Leveraging the Mind (IIMB).
4. Themes such as Blue Ocean Strategy (XLRI), Learning from Corporate Failures (IIMB) and Luxury Business (IIMA & B) are clearly contemporary in the listings. In the Indian context, currently similar would be a programme like 'Leadership Lessons from the Military' (IIMB). Also, time tested themes appear with contemporary and futuristic orientations, such as *Agile Project Management* (IIMK).
  5. One specific orientation that seem to have evolved emphatically in the recent times is for Leadership and Management programmes to be specifically designed for or targeted at Schools and Principals, Management and Engineering Schools, and Educators at large. Leading and Managing Educational Institutions - right from our normal Schools to Professional Schools and Higher Educational Institutes and Universities - is clearly and dearly in the radar of Indian Management Schools.
  6. There is a noticeable trend to offer programmes which bring in global and cross boarder orientation (e.g.: 'Creativity, Reinvention and Self Development for Global Managers' and 'CXO Programme: Building Business in Emerging Markets' (IIMB); and 'Doing Business Abroad' and 'Family Business: Organisation, Strategies, Internationalisation and Succession' (IIMA)).
  7. The word 'Excellence,' even 3 decades after the publication of *In Search of Excellence* appears in quite a few programmes (e.g.: Operational Excellence through Lean Six Sigma, Leveraging Behavioural Inputs for Managerial Excellence). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) also seems to get some specific attention.
  8. Programmes specifically focused at *Women Managers* are a highly noticeable set of offerings, some of them with attractive titles as well, such as: *Rising Stars Program for Aspiring Women Professionals* (IIMK) and *Tanmatra - Women in Leadership* (IIMB). Also noteworthy is the observation that, of the seven such open programmes that I could locate for the year 2014-15 in some of our leading Institutions, two of which were indeed programmes of 3 and 4 weeks duration and specifically meant for *women entrepreneurs*, there are a total of twelve Faculty Coordinators/Facilitators, of which all but two are women themselves; which to me on the one side certainly heralds the enhanced presence and prominence of women on the Faculty of our Institutions and their specific area of interest, but which, at least in a lighter vein, probably also may call for a better gender balance in facilitation / involvement?

Certainly, there is a fair amount of evidence, then, to suggest the nature of Faculty Competencies available and their current orientation with regard to executive learning and development, in these leading, and many of them, elite, management institutions in India. However, whether all the offered open programmes actually get sufficiently subscribed, and run as declared, is still not sure and clear from the publicly available data. Informal information exchange with HR Managers and Faculty colleagues and friends across the IIMs makes me suggest that, not every Institution is currently equally successful with their Open Programmes. A number of Open Programmes are not subscribed at all, or not subscribed to the extent that they used to be, say, just a decade back. A June 2013 report in *Business Standard*, one of the leading Indian business dailies highlights this trend, it states: "days for open enrolment programmes are more or less over, say [the Indian] B-schools."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Executive education programme cycle gets longer at B-schools: Days for open programme almost over, custom-made module more in demand.* By Vinay Umariji & Kalpana Pathak, *Business Standard*, June 12, 2013. Accessed from [http://www.business-standard.com/article/management/executive-education-programme-cycle-gets-longer-at-b-schools-113061200929\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/management/executive-education-programme-cycle-gets-longer-at-b-schools-113061200929_1.html), on 12 Nov 2014.

***b. Customized Programmes***

A closer look probably reveals that, the above observation, however, is not saying really anything negative or bad about these offerings or the Institutions and their Faculty who offer them. This trend is the outcome of a major change in the way Indian Managers and their Corporate HR now approach the activity and responsibility of Executive Learning and Development. Today, most Indian corporates, and that prominently includes Public Sector Units (PSUs), many of which have bounced back to efficiency and profits over the last two decades of India's liberalization and globalization, and even the Government Departments as well, have already shifted, or are in the process of shifting, towards a visibly higher dose of Customized Programmes for their managers and personnel. Indeed it now seems that in some of our Institutions, customized programmes account for anywhere between 60 to 80% of the total Executive Programme Revenues.

When we look at these customized programmes currently, there are also some very interesting features:

1. There is noticeably increased negotiations between the programme offering entity/Institute, the programme directors/facilitators and the company personnel, which in certain cases even involve people very high in the organization, such as Vice President HR. This, no doubt, conveys the importance which companies give to the training choices (read investments) they make. Every Rupee or Dollar matters - equivalent 'Takeaways' have to be explicitly listed. Some of these Company personnel even work with Faculty continuously in developing the exact course plan-outline, choosing the readings and cases, and so on. Some of them also want Programme faculty to visit them in advance, learn about their work and context, and even develop firm specific cases which are (and have to be) used in their Programme(s). Of course, the faculty usually get the authorship and copyright for academic use and publication of such materials developed.
2. Indeed this is a highly welcome development, as seen by many Faculty Members. The welcome that some of the Companies are offering, opening up some of their data bases for access, and allowing more open interactions with some of their key personnel, are already showing results in the form of Teaching Cases and hold the potential to forge continued research relations with their managers into the future
3. How companies go ahead selecting their customized programme is also noteworthy. They often get the specific idea about possible training themes and faculty members who can offer such programmes, from the Open Programme listing of Institutions. This point has an important bearing on Institutes, considering what I described a little while back about the decline in Open Programmes. That is, even if many Open Programmes may not be running, it is important for the Institutes / B-Schools to bring out a detailed list of such Programmes every year. Because, it is from such listing of Open Programmes that the Business world and Companies get a first-hand, reliable and reasonably clear idea about the thematic, functional or sectoral orientations and competency of Faculty, which is then taken forward and followed up by the Companies' Learning and Development Officers to finally arrive at Programmes customized for them. I have also observed that some Companies and HR Managers straightaway choose the open programmes from the listing, and ask them to be specifically offered to their managers, either at the Institution or at their premises, or in a city of mutual convenience.
4. Increasingly many Companies are wanting programmes spread over a few months, wherein the same group of participants would visit the Institute for 3 to 6 days every month and then return back to their jobs. During the time back in their jobs, they have to conduct one or more project studies, illustrating implementation of the learning from the

programme, and developing or coming up with something that is of use and relevance for the Company. The Project is usually formally presented towards the end of the Programme, the presentation often being also attended by some of the senior managers of the firm. In many instances, the faculty also grade the Projects, like they do in the MBA. Naturally, since these projects are guided by Faculty Members, there is also the potential of Case Development or other publications out of them.

5. Usually in the above type of long drawn programmes, even when the actual direct contact hours could be low, some companies are insisting on formal evaluation and grading as in the MBA. They also want standard textbooks, readings and cases to be distributed to the participants, and exams and quizzes to be conducted. Needless to say, while Institutions, out of their need for sustaining relationships and/or revenue considerations agree to these type of demands or needs, it does create difficulties for quite a few Faculty, who distinguish training of managers as different from teaching of MBA students. While textbooks, exams, quizzes and so on, as we know, are the usual norm for MBA Classes and Students along with heavy dose of concepts, theories and analysis; when it comes to Executive training sessions, it is usually more about reflection, realization, confirmation, re-affirmation, clarification and of course conceptual learning as well, with moderate to heavy inclination towards application, often direct and immediate.
6. For some of these customized, long drawn programmes, where usually what a Participant would get at the end is only a participation certificate (along with any grades, if evaluation was done), and not any diploma or so, it is noted that some companies even seem to be holding certain internal processes of selection for nomination, including written tests and interviews; thus making it competitive for participation. These are new trends with regard to executive learning and development activities in Indian Organizations.
7. When grading is done by Faculty in these customized programmes, and when certain companies insist that it be done, whether they use the final grades for any performance management, rewards or incentives for the participant is not uniformly clear, particularly in the medium term.
8. A reasonable estimate<sup>7</sup> shows that in many of our Institutions, about 50% of the customized programmes currently offered are at the middle management level, followed by about 20% each for senior as well as front-line/entry levels, and close to 10% for the Top Management Team, with very few for CEOs. Of course, for some of the most elite schools in the country, while middle management ratio of programmes is likely to be same as stated here, there could be a good movement of the ratio from front-line/entry level towards the senior, top and CEO levels.
9. It is also noted that some of the leading companies seem to adopt a dual strategy of open programmes and customized programmes for their personnel. In the last decade and earlier too, this combination existed, but with a difference. What was happening then was that, the Companies would nominate some of their good managers as 'test cases' for the open programmes, and then based on their feedback, would then invite the concerned faculty team to do customized programmes either at their premises, in the Institution itself, or in a mutually convenient location. However, what seems to be happening currently is a little different. While the above mode still works but in a limited manner, and as mentioned earlier, the companies just look at the list of open offerings to pursue their choice of, and negotiations for, customized programmes, currently some good companies seem to have anchored on a different mode of operations as well. They opt for customized programmes from Indian Institutions at a mass level for their entry, middle

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<sup>7</sup>Based on an informal discussion with Mr. Ashraf Adiraja, Manager (Management Development Programmes), IIMK. I would also like to acknowledge that I benefited in general from this discussion as I prepared this Talk.

and senior middle level managers, and in certain instances even for their senior and top managers. However, they prefer to send their 'star and upcoming star' and even some 'potential star' managers for very select open programmes abroad, to B-Schools in Europe and US; as part of a well thought out career management plan for these managers.<sup>8</sup> In this manner, they probably plan and aim to get the best of both worlds, at affordable/manageable cost, and in an organizationally balanced or reasonably distributed and purposive manner.

These trends and insights would certainly indicate that customized programmes are here to stay, and stay prominently, at least in the foreseeable future. However, as it happens with many facets of life, and managerial and organizational life, a new cycle could get initiated whereby, open programmes which have the advantage of wider and pluralistic organizational participation and learning interactions could get back to some of its past prominence, when the utility and effectiveness of customized programmes reach a plateau or begin to diminish.

In the above pages, I have made an attempt, certainly not exhaustive but still reasonable, to describe some salient aspects of executive learning and development, as seen and approached by Indian B-Schools and Management Institutions on the one side, and Organizations and Corporates on the other. However, there is another major trend that have evolved mostly in the last one decade in India, and which has already become quite prominent in the Executive learning space. That is, the trend towards long duration, formal management education for working executives. I devote some attention to this development in the next section.

## **B. Executive Education**

What I specifically mean by the term *Executive Education* here is the formal, long duration programmes which are run by accredited Institutions and Universities and which at the end, award a diploma, degree, title, or course participation and clearing certificate based on formal evaluation-grading. These programmes are so designed to enable executives to pursue formal and structured learning alongside working on their jobs; and range from Post Graduate Certificate Programmes in Management to Doctoral level research degree/title programmes, with Executive MBA and Post Graduate Diploma Programmes, falling in between.

The history and evolution of formal Executive Education in India shows that till about the turn of the century, such programmes were relatively rare, and not at all among the prominent offerings of most management schools and university departments. For instance, among the notable ones in this regard was the 4 months long Management Education Programme (MEP) at IIMA, and an evening (part-time) Post Graduate Certificate Programme for managers at IIMC, alongside some evening or other part-time programmes run by some of the Indian Universities and Engineering colleges, and distance education programmes offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

### **01. Executive MBA; and Executive Post Graduate Programme in Management (Certificate & Diploma)**

However, the scenario today, just about in a decade's time, is vastly different. In my observation and experience, if there is one domain where almost all the activity and orientation is showing high vigour, then, it is in the domain of formal executive education. In a sense, the story probably began with the launch of a formal, one year long, post graduate certificate programme in management by IIMK over the interactive, satellite based platform,

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<sup>8</sup>ibid.



in early 2002. IIMK was the first in Asia, and probably in the Asia-Pacific as well, to adopt this mode of education delivery, where the Instructors would teach from a studio in the Institute, specifically set up for this purpose, and participants could see and hear the Instructors and their lectures-presentations, but in return they could only ask questions but could not be seen by the Instructor.<sup>9,10</sup>

Within a few months of the above Programme launch, XLRI followed, and today many of the leading and other Indian Management Institutions have programmes running on the synchronous learning platform through satellite broadband. Today, this mode of education has become very popular, and have been modified to include in-campus modules such that the participants also get a feel and touch of the physical space and ambience of the Institution from where they are graduating. The programme structure also has undergone changes such that from a certificate programme of one year duration, some Institutions now offer two year executive MBA, and also with option to opt for standalone modules or specializations such as in Finance, Strategy, HR, and so on. Needless to add, this is a significant source of revenue for many of our Management Institutions. This domain has also seen highly specialized educational service providers emerging, such as NIIT Imperia<sup>11</sup> who has tied up with leading Institutions for Programme offers.

A perusal of a sample of current offerings on the synchronous learning platform from some of the Institutions show a trend towards high quantity, variation in duration, and covering many specializations as well as general MBA. For instance IIMC lists 18 Programmes of which 16 are of one year duration, and spans specializations such as strategy, supply chain, sales and marketing, and HR. IIMK lists 7 regular programmes of which one is a two year executive MBA and the rest are specializations of one year duration in various functional areas of Management. XLRI offers 5 programmes of one year duration under the broad heading of *Virtual Interactive Learning*, one of which is the general MBA type of Programme, and the rest four are specializations in fields such as HR, Retail, Logistics and Supply Chain Management.

A significant number of Executives, from diverse sectors, industries and organizations prefer to join these Programmes; alongside Officers of the Indian Armed Forces and Government Services also who enroll. There seems to be three basic reasons for most participants to enroll: (1) To make use of a new, affordable and accessible opportunity to acquire a formal degree/diploma which they could not do earlier in their life owing to circumstantial or other reasons; (2). To overcome stagnation in career advancement in the current organization for want of formal professional qualification; and (3) To strive for a career change - of organization, industry, sector or even function (coupled with or without any career advancement). Each of these reasons could be acting alone or in combination with the other(s) for most of the participants. Of course, there are also those who enroll for the pleasure of pure learning and development, and to enhance one's effectiveness and probability of success in an already successful job/role. Although very few currently, there are also some participants who enroll for these programmes with the intention of pursuing further higher studies, and even aspiring to shift to academia.

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<sup>9</sup> I was among the team of four faculty members, including our then Director Professor AH Kalro, who traveled all the way from Kozhikode in the far south of India, to Gurgaon near New Delhi in the North, to kick start this programme from the studio of Hughes Communications India (see: <http://www.hughes.in/Pages/default.aspx>).

<sup>10</sup> Within a short period of time after the launch, the communication process in the Programme became two-way audio and video, also with chat and other forms of interaction (such as signaling).

<sup>11</sup> See: <http://www.niitimperia.com/>. Also see: Unified Collaboration Services - <http://www.vcnw.in/>

Corporates and HR Managers are closely following these trends and utilizing them for their Organizations benefit. There are often talks between Companies and B-Schools towards assuring and being assured of a certain number of enrolments in such Programmes every year. While the B-schools allot a specific number of seats to such Companies, they in turn financially sponsor their candidates and grant the required study leave. In short, this is currently a highly vibrant domain of activity in the Indian B-Schools and Executive-Corporate world; and it is likely to be so for some more time, although some signs of leveling off and even decline are beginning to be seen, especially with regard to some of the specializations, most likely owing to over-crowding of such programmes already, and probable issues of maintaining sustained quality and rigour on both sides of the offer.

## 02. Executive Doctoral Programmes

In my observation, a phenomenally noteworthy development in executive education in India is the heightened activity now seen in the domain of Doctoral Education targeted at executives, of which probably XLRI was the pioneer among the leading Indian B-schools; and currently some of the IIMs too have Executive Doctoral candidates in their advanced stages. While XLRI, IIM Lucknow and MDI calls it EFPM (Executive Fellow Programme in Management), IIM Indore calls it FPM (Industry). Indeed even the newer set of IIMs seem to be keen on EFPM with the programme being already on offer by some of them.

An exploration into what these Programmes seek to offer could be interesting. While IIMI declares its FPM (Industry) to be “a unique doctoral level programme in management for working professionals...[that] provides an excellent opportunity... to contribute to the field of management sciences by doing research;”<sup>12</sup> IIML seems to take a more realistic and straightforward view when they say: “Increasing complexity in the corporate world is forcing the middle level and senior level executives to search for options that can give them significant edge. A doctoral programme or a Ph.D. is the likely answer. But the big question today is “how does one obtain this qualification with a full time corporate job...[and our] program is uniquely designed... and primarily aims at preparing students for career in management research, teaching and consulting.”<sup>13</sup> These descriptions clearly indicate that, even though the Doctoral Programme is for Executives (most of who continue on their job as well while studying), the primary objective is still the same as that of the regular Doctoral Programmes - i.e., to prepare academicians and researchers in Management.

An indication of the evolving thrust seen in this domain in India currently is the introduction of DBA (Doctor of Business Administration). Under the heading of “IMT Ghaziabad brings India its first DBA,” the *Institute of Management Technology* (IMT; another leading B-School) states: “A first in India, enabling induction of top executive experience into management academia formally, with a globally recognized degree.”<sup>14</sup> Its first cohort of seven participants who started their DBA journey in late September 2013, also boasts of cross boarder representation –only 3 are from India, and 4 are from Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

My considered assessment is that, Executive Doctoral Programmes are here to stay in India for a variety of reasons. First, there are Executives, who in today's world of business and organizational management, reach high positions by the time they turn into their 40s, and then begin to seriously reflect on what better to do than what they have always been doing

<sup>12</sup> Accessed from <http://www.iimidr.ac.in/iimi/index.php/programmes/academic-programmes/fellow-programme-in-management-industry-fpm-industry>, on 20 Nov 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Accessed from [http://www.iiml.ac.in/?page\\_id=58](http://www.iiml.ac.in/?page_id=58), on 20 Nov 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Accessed from <http://www.imt.edu/Programmes/IMTGrenobleDBA.aspx>, on 20 Nov 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Accessed from <http://www.imt.edu/Programmes/FirstBatchDBA.aspx>, on 20 Nov 2014.

thus far. Often, one of the natural realization in this reflection or answer to this question is to pursue some meaningful higher studies; and a Doctoral Programme in Management is a natural choice. It also helps them that the entry to these programmes is also possible through successful participation in customized selection processes designed by the respective Institution. Further, many of these Executives usually continue in their job, and would, in many cases pursue their dissertation in their organization itself, or they have reasonable contacts in other organizations to obtain relatively easy access for data collection. Of course, the flip side would be the usual comparisons that are made between full time and part-time programmes.

### **C. International Programmes**

Some of our B-Schools are also into the international domain in a significant way with respect to executive learning and education. Considering the increasing prominence of Asia in the Business world, of which India seems to get some focused attention, increasingly many executives want to come to some of the Indian B-Schools to attend programmes, to directly experience some aspects of the context and learn. On other side, some of these Institutions also offer Programmes in collaboration with B-Schools outside of India, and take their executive participants (Indian and foreign) through short stints of immersion and learning in different significant business locations and learning centers. A notable programme in this regard is the *International Masters Program in Practicing Management (IMPM)* by IIMB, which is a "cooperative venture of Business Schools in the five countries of UK, Canada, India, China and Brazil."<sup>16</sup>

This domain of International Programmes for Executives - both Indian and Foreign; and moving in both directions -I believe, is set to witness more intense activity in the coming years. In this connection, it may also be noted that Harvard Business School has its own Classroom facilities in Mumbai where they hold Executive learning and development programmes; and some of the other US and European B-schools too offer their Executive Programmes in India, directly or through other Institutional collaborations in India.

### **D. Closure**

In this Talk, my endeavour was to make a fair attempt to describe some of the recent and current trends and features of Executive Learning, Development and Education in India. Certainly this is not an exhaustive analysis, but nonetheless I believe it is still reasonable in its coverage of themes and elicitation of trends. There is no doubt - Executive Development domain in India is flourishing - recently and currently, and the trend is likely to be sustained in the foreseeable future, unless something severely adversely evolve, particularly at the international level to affect it, like another economic crisis or so.

Like in many other domains of human, managerial and organizational life, Technology has been the game changer in the domain of Executive Learning and Education too. It has been playing a major role in enhancing executive learning and education options, opportunities and access. And, at the micro level, it is also significantly influencing classroom pedagogical choices - increased use of computer based simulations being a case in point, alongside the use of multimedia cases.

It could be a crazy thought, but still: *Is it going to be a scenario where increasingly the elders will earnestly endeavour to learn, and the youngsters will enthusiastically seek to work? To*

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<sup>16</sup> Accessed from <http://www.iimb.ernet.in/executive-education/international-programmes>, on 15 Nov 2014.

me, when I look around, and observe the opportunities and trends, there seems to be the possibility of such a possibility, at least remote, tending to be visible, but yet in hiding. Whatever the answer to this question might be, it is a fact that Executive Learning and Education is riding a high wave currently in India, with enthusiastic participation from the B-Schools and Management Institutions (both Indian and some Foreign) as well as the Corporates, Public Sector Units, Governments, Family Firms, Entrepreneurs and so on and their Personnel, Officers and Managers; all pitching in to play the game - the mode of play seeming to: 'build as you design, and design as you build'; which makes it challenging as well for all the players.

**Thank You for this Opportunity & My Best Regards and Warm Wishes to You!**