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# SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN DELHI

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## ABSTRACT

Globalisation and changing world order has led to growing importance of management education in all countries including India. Today, Masters in Business Administration (MBA) has become one of the most sought after courses. It is considered to offer immense opportunities to individuals and a 'ticket' to raise fast in the corporate ladder. Thus over a period of time, there has been huge expansion in both demand and supply of management education in India. With increasing demand of this course, there has been expansion in private initiatives in the field. With high fees, meritorious students with poor family backgrounds are also argued to be excluded from the fast growth story of management education just because of their inability to afford management education. In light of this discussion, this study examines the beneficiaries of public (subsidized) and private (self-financing) management education, their socio-economic background and delve into issues of accessibility of management education. Sample size is 200 students of four management institutions (50 students from each institution). Institutions were selected on the basis of their location and ownership. All the four institutions are from Delhi Region. The four Institutions selected are: A Management Department of a Central University, A Management Department of a self-financing State University, Private Autonomous Institution, Private Autonomous Institution. Data was collected through primary survey. It was found that majority of the students in both sample public and private institutions were from middle income background, belong to metropolitan city and are of general category. Majority of the students had a steady source of income. The study concludes by giving recommendations on improving access of management education by charging differential fee and making policies to ensure equalised opportunities for students from disadvantaged background.

## JEL CODE

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## KEYWORDS

Equity, Management Education, Public Institutions, Private Institutions, Socio-economic background.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the true alchemy that can bring India its next golden age. Our motto is unambiguous: All for knowledge, and knowledge for all." This statement of Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the President of India made in Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012 reflects the importance of education for all countries. To understand the essence of the above statement, one has to truly reflect on the fast changing world order. Earlier it was defined by the cold war, nuclear weapons & oil. But now countries are competing economically with their focus on GDP growth, International Trade agreements, Satellites launches, space probes for moon/mars, manufacturing, Software development and IT Outsourcing. The new world order encourages investment in innovation and product development, bringing a changing world order where some of the top companies of the world did not even exist 15 years ago. The enabler to all this is investment in knowledge based society.

This new world order has led to growing importance of management education in all countries including India. Today, Masters in Business Administration (MBA) has become one of the most sought after courses. It is considered to offer immense opportunities to individuals and a 'ticket' to raise fast in the corporate ladder. Thus over a period of time, there has been huge expansion in both demand and supply of management education in India. With increasing demand of this course, there has been expansion in private initiatives in the field. However private institutions have been often criticized for catering to a rich section of society creating an unequitable growth accentuating the gap between 'know' and 'know-nots' and 'haves' and 'have nots'

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The phrase "equity in higher education" refers to creating opportunities for equal access and success in higher education among historically underrepresented student populations, such as ethnic minority and low-income students. Ensuring equality of access to sources of social and economic opportunities is the fundamental principle on which a socially just and democratic society evolves. Equitable access to social, religious, occupational and economic groups living both in rural and urban areas to educational opportunities in general and higher education in particular has remained a major challenge before the policy makers for nearly six decades since the independence. (UGC, 2008)

As per the World Bank report on governance of higher education in India, 2010 the higher education faces the following daunting challenges:

- Expansion of access to higher education and decentralization of powerbase
- Equity in educational opportunity and social justice
- Consolidation and qualitative improvement of colleges and expanding the base of social relevance of higher education
- Linkage of education to employment through knowledge and skill upgrading
- Accountability at all levels

Research in higher education in India has shown that the benefits of educational expansion occur essentially for the already privileged sections, with limited participation of the disadvantaged in the development process. The contemporary challenge is to achieve access, equity and quality of higher education simultaneously. (Thapliyal, 2013) UGC also recognized that the true potential of India's youth can be harnessed only through access to higher education. However, our national effort in increasing such access could be futile without nurturing social equity. The immense potential of our youth belonging to the vulnerable sections of the Indian society is as yet untapped. (UGC, 2012)

Access to higher education needs to be widened in the country, both within the formal system and through other effective innovative measures, such as a truly open system and networking of Universities. (UGC, 2003) Inequality in higher education is detrimental to everyone. It negatively impacts, both economically and socially, the entire nation in such matters as unemployment rates, welfare costs, voter turnout, income, and healthcare.

There are various social, economic and political reasons which seem to act as constraints to access and equity in higher education in India. Poverty leads to high drop-out rates even at primary, middle and secondary school levels. Lower status of women, lack of easy access, lack of implementation of existing programmes, inadequate utilization of resources, absence of political will and inadequacies in coordinated actions across all equity fronts within institutions seem to be the other reason. Financial constraints also often form a significant factor in advancing equity. (UGC, 2003)

According to a recent report only 10% of the University-age population, between the ages of 22 years and 35 years, have access to higher education. Although many efforts have been made to encourage education at school level, the education past Class 12th be it vocational or technical has not seen nearly as many provisions to make it more accessible.

The report "Intergenerational and Regional Differentials in Higher Education in India" was written by development economist, Abusaleh Shariff from the Delhi-based Centre for Research and Debates in Development Policy and research analyst Amit Sharma, from the National Council of Applied Economic Research. The report has found that there is a staggering difference between the number of students at school level and number of students for higher studies. The disparity exists across gender, social, economic, geographical and religious groups.

**Lewis, Halil. (1999)** has analysed the critical issues facing higher education institutions in the developing world. They asserted that despite increases in enrolments, programs and institutions, there has been only limited progress on equalizing educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups in developing countries. It pointed out the inequalities inherent in systems that provide free or low cost education to students from middle and high-income families and calls for the implementation of tuition fees (or increases in existing tuition fees) of up to 20 or 25 percent of instructional costs and the use of some of these funds for means tested financial assistance to students from lower socio-economic groups.

According to **Panchamukhi (1981)** there is need to provide positive inputs for education equalisation supplemented by equalisation of opportunities for realising the returns from education"

It was also noted that unequal access to Higher education often reflects deficiencies at lower levels of the education system. Preferential policies and remedial actions at the University level may not be able to fully redress inequalities arising from disparities in school quality. The World Bank examines this issue of access in detail and says that strategies must be multifaceted if they are to be effective in increasing representation of the weak. Their strategies include, improving secondary education, increasing the demand of the weaker section for higher education, diversification of institutions and subsidising their studies. On the other hand, prescriptions like reduction of demand for higher education, reduction of subsidies, steep increase of fees etc. may be considered as anti-poor which further encourage elitist trends in higher education.

**Afza (2011)** has highlighted the growth of higher education and mushrooming of business schools and the issues and challenges faced. The study revealed following pressing issues facing business schools:

- B-schools face the shortage of quality faculty members with doctoral degree or substantial industry experience,
- Management education requires a massive experimentation in terms of extended summer internship for four to six months or in terms of experiential learning which involves several live projects of shorter duration.
- B-schools face lack of soft skills among students, which is necessary for becoming successful managers.

The study further stated that if all these challenges are successfully met, they will create opportunities for business schools to differentiate themselves from the crowd of business education providers. The study finally concluded that although India produces a large number of management graduates, next only to the U.S., scholarly debate on curriculum, pedagogy, and innovation is negligible. There is urgent need to welcome and enable the establishment of a new wave of management schools of excellence which would be a role model for a number of schools. The circumstances today, of an increasing demand in the market for good quality management graduates, provides a great opportunity to rethink the ways in which management schools can produce excellent managers.

## NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Expansion in Management Education, private share in particular has been surrounded with the debate of quality, equity and affordability. Issues of access and equity are central to the higher education debates in countries around the world. For the Indian higher education system in transition, access and equity became two of its most intriguing aspects. These are very complex issues, intertwined with political, economic, demographic and international dimensions. (Aggarwal, 2006) Thus, UGC (2003) has also recommended that access, equity, accountability and quality should form the four guiding principles, while planning for higher education development in India in the twenty-first century.

Private or self-financed Institutes are often criticized for charging high fees from students and extracting even more by creating various types of seats like management quota seats and NRI/Industry sponsored seats. Meritorious students with poor family backgrounds are also argued to be excluded from the fast growth story of management education just because of their inability to afford management education. (Reddy, 1992; Sinha, 2010)

In light of this discussion, it becomes essential to examine the beneficiaries of public (subsidized) and private (self-financing) management education, their socio-economic background and delve into issues of accessibility of management education. An analysis of socio-economic profile of management students of sample Institutes would throw light on whether it is whole society or a particular section of society which is getting benefitted by expansion of management education in India. It will provide deep insights into the issues of equity and access.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To examine the socio-economic background of students pursuing management education in public and private Institutions.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly conducted using primary sources of information or data which were collected with the help of the questionnaire cum schedule. The personal interview technique has also been used to collect the information. In order to supplement the primary data, secondary data has been collected from various sources such as research journals and books. To probe into these issues, a small survey was conducted on students of four management Institutes. Sample size is 200 respondents (50 from each Institution).

### SAMPLING

200 students of four management institutions have been selected. (50 respondents per institution). Institutions were selected on the basis of their location and ownership. All the four institutions are from Delhi Region. The four Institutions selected are:

- A Management Department of a Central University
- A Management Department of a self-financing State University
- A Private Autonomous Institution
- A Private Autonomous Institution

One of the problems encountered during study was reluctance on part of Institutions to provide contacts of Alumni. Thus, names of the institutions are not disclosed.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE

An analysis of general profile of students revealed about the beneficiaries of management education in private and public institutions.

#### AVERAGE AGE

The analysis revealed that average age of sampled students at the time of admission in MBA/PGDM in all the four institutes is very close. It is 22 years for 3 Institutes and 21 for a private management Institute (A). Thus on an average sampled students of four institutes were of same age.

#### GENDER

Gender division of sampled students showed that the male students comprised of a majority in all Institutes. Table 1 reveals that 60% of sampled students of Management Department of a State University, 64% of Management department of a Central University, 52% of private Institute (B) and 56% of private Institute (A) were males.

The gender division of sampled students is in consonance with worldwide scenario of management institutes. Management Education has always been dominated by males. Although female participation has increased over the time, but even now female students constitute minority in Management Education Institutions. According to the QS Top MBA Applicant Survey 2012, the proportion of female candidates, however, has increased gradually from 33% in 2005 to



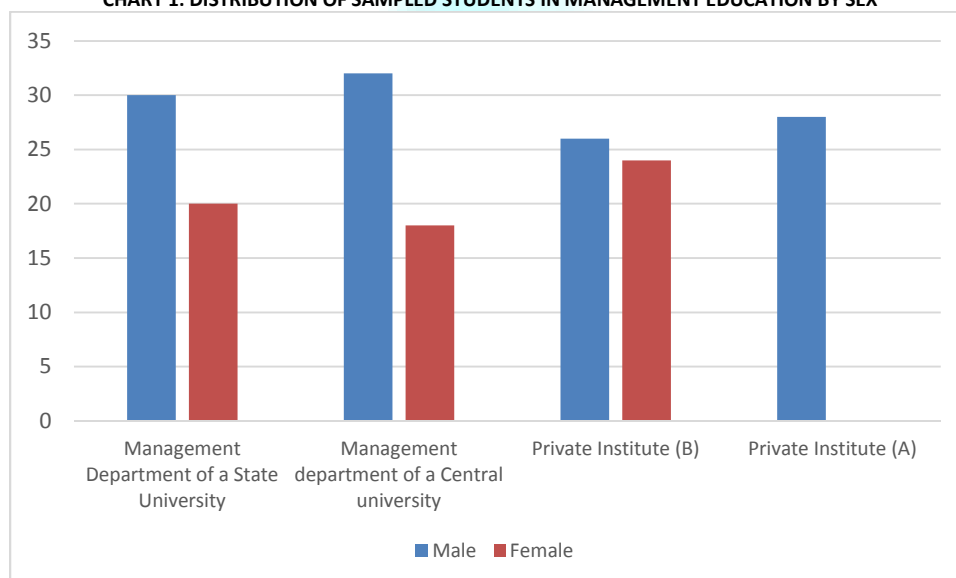
39% in 2012. Interestingly, Eastern Europe is the only region out of six where females dominate their male counterparts at MBA programmes with 53.4% compared to 46.6%, followed by US and Canada where women represent 47%. When it comes to Africa and Middle East, the number is down to 29.9%, whereas in Western Europe it is 33.6%. Under Asia-Pacific region, including India and China, which send the highest number of applicants for MBA programmes, the figure is 36.9% followed by Latin America at 42%.

At Institutional level, Harvard Business School, although women accounted for 36% of Harvard's Class of 2009, only 11% of the school's Baker Scholars were female. That honor is given to students who are in the top 5% of HBS' graduating class. Meantime, only 21% of the first year honors (for being in the top 20%) for the class were awarded to women and only 22% of the second year honors were given to women. In that same year at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, graduating female MBAs accounted for only 19% of those who were named Arjay Miller Scholars, those in the top 10% of Stanford's class by academic grades. Yet, women made up 34% of the Class of 2009. (<http://poetsandquants.com/2013/09/09/is-misogyny-only-an-hbs-problem/>)

**TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY SEX**

Name of the Institute	Male	Female	Total
Management Department of a State University	30 (60)	20 (40)	50 (100)
Management department of a Central university	32 (64)	18 (36)	50 (100)
Private Institute (B)	26 (52)	24 (48)	50 (100)
Private Institute (A)	28 (56)	22 (44)	50 (100)

\*Figure in bracket indicates percentage

**CHART 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY SEX**

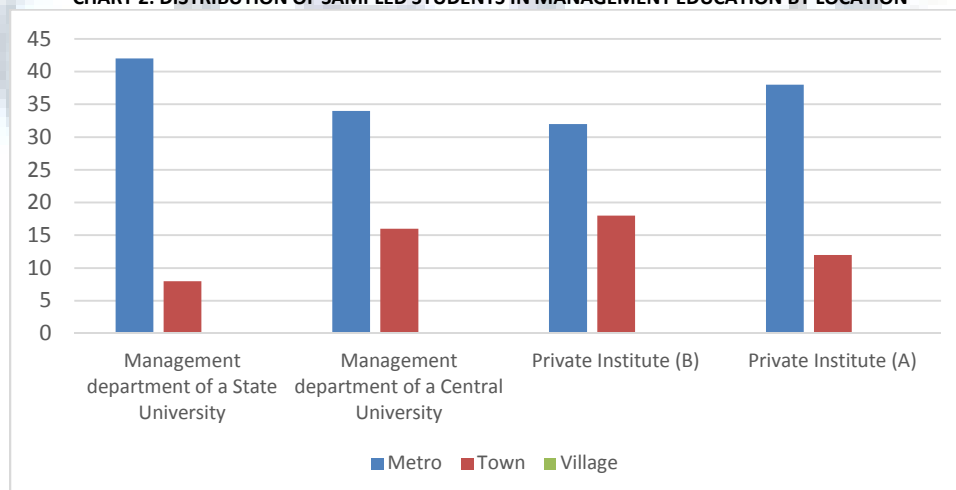
## 2. LOCATION OF THE STUDENTS PURSUING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS.

Regarding location background, majority of the sample students belong to Metropolitan city. In Management department of a state University, 84% students belong to Metropolitan city and 16% of the students belong to town. In case of management department of central university, 68% of the sampled students are from metropolitan city, 32% of the students were from town. In case of private Institutes Private Institute (B) and Private Institute (A), 64% and 76% of sampled students respectively belong to Metropolitan city. In Private Institute (B) and Private Institute (A), 36% and 24% respectively belong to towns. (Kindly refer to Table 2).

**TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY LOCATION**

Name of the Institute	Metro	Town	Village	Total
Management department of a State University	42 (84)	8 (16)	0	50
Management department of a Central University	34 (68)	16 (32)	0	50
Private Institute (B)	32 (64)	18 (36)	0	50
Private Institute (A)	38 (76)	12 (24)	0	50

\*Figure in bracket indicates percentage

**CHART 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY LOCATION**

### 3. SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENTS PURSUING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS

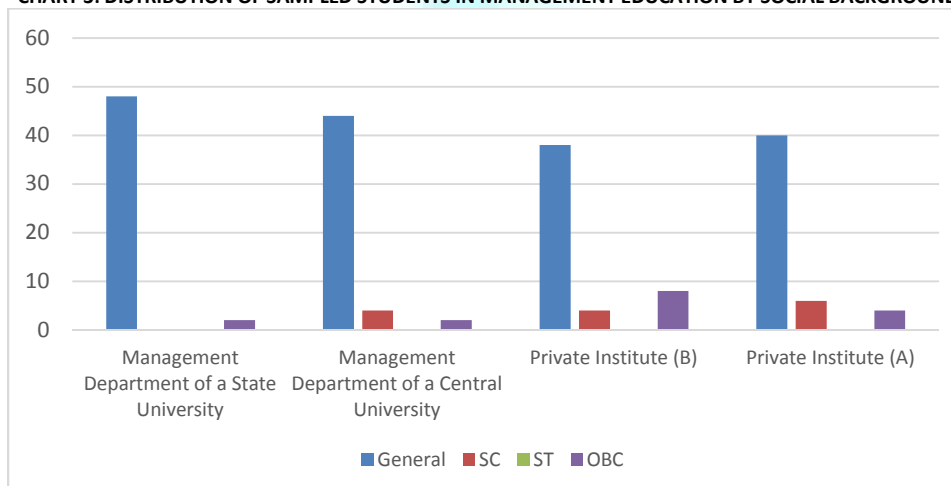
Table 3 reveals that majority of sampled students pursuing their post-graduation in management belong to General category. In Management department of a State University (96%), Management department of a Central University (88%), Private Institute (B) (76%) and Private Institute (A) (22%) belong to General category. There was no ST among sampled students. SC and OBC also constituted a very small percentage with 0% and 4% (1 student) respectively in Management department of a State University, 8% and 4% respectively in Management department of a Central University, 2% and 4% in Private Institute (B), 3% and 2% in Private Institute (A). (Table 3) It can be interpreted from above results that access to disadvantaged section of society is still limited or negligible. Interestingly, this skewed access is present in both subsidized university management departments and private Institutions.

**TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY SOCIAL BACKGROUND**

Name of the Institute	General	SC	ST	OBC	Total Responses
Management Department of a State University	48 (96)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (4)	50
Management Department of a Central University	44 (88)	4 (8)	0 (0)	2 (4)	50
Private Institute (B)	38 (76)	4 (8)	0 (0)	8 (16)	50
Private Institute (A)	40 (80)	6 (12)	0 (0)	4 (8)	50

\*Figure in bracket indicates percentage

**CHART 3: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY SOCIAL BACKGROUND**



### 4. FAMILY STATUS IN TERMS OF OCCUPATION AND INCOME OF THE STUDENTS PURSUING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS

Parent's occupation and income level is an important aspect of student's profile. A number of studies have indicated a significant positive relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and their involvement in their children's education. (N Vellymalay; 2011, Lueptow's (1975))

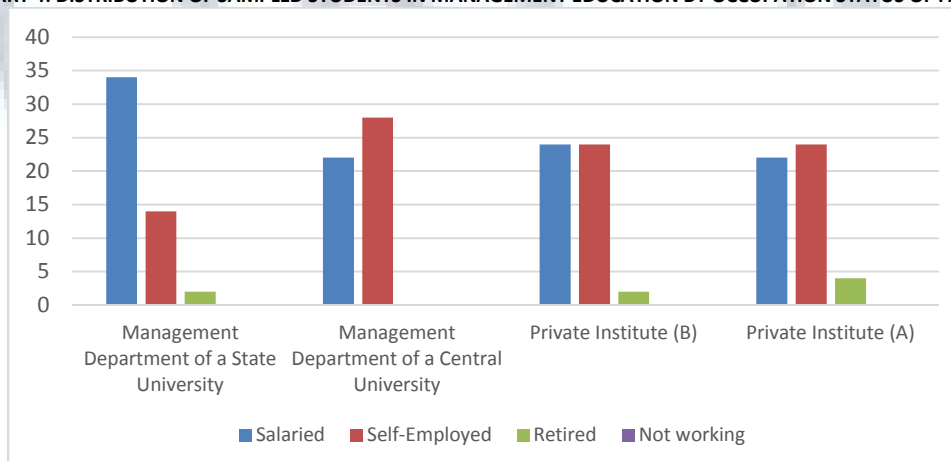
An analysis of occupation division of sampled students' father revealed (Table 4) that father of majority of sampled students were service men (government/private) and a very little portion of students' father were retired or not working. It can be observed from Table 6.4 that in Management department of a State University, 68% fathers are salaried, 28 % are self-employed, and 1 of the students' father is retired. In Management department of a Central University, majority of fathers are self-employed (56%) and 44% are salaried. In Private Institute (B) and Private Institute (A), distribution is around equal. In Private Institute (B), 1 of the students' father is retired and in Private Institute (A), 2 of the students' fathers are retired. It can be interpreted that majority of students' father have a steady source of income in both university management departments and private institutions.

**TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY OCCUPATION STATUS OF FATHER**

Name of the Institute	Salaried	Self-Employed	Retired	Not working	Response Count
Management Department of a State University	34 (68)	14 (28)	2 (4)	0 (0)	50 (100)
Management Department of a Central University	22 (44)	28 (56)	0 (0)	0 (0)	50 (100)
Private Institute (B)	24 (48)	24 (48)	2 (4)	0 (0)	50 (100)
Private Institute (A)	22 (44)	24 (48)	4 (8)	0 (0)	50 (100)

\*Figure in bracket indicates percentage

**CHART 4: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY OCCUPATION STATUS OF FATHER**



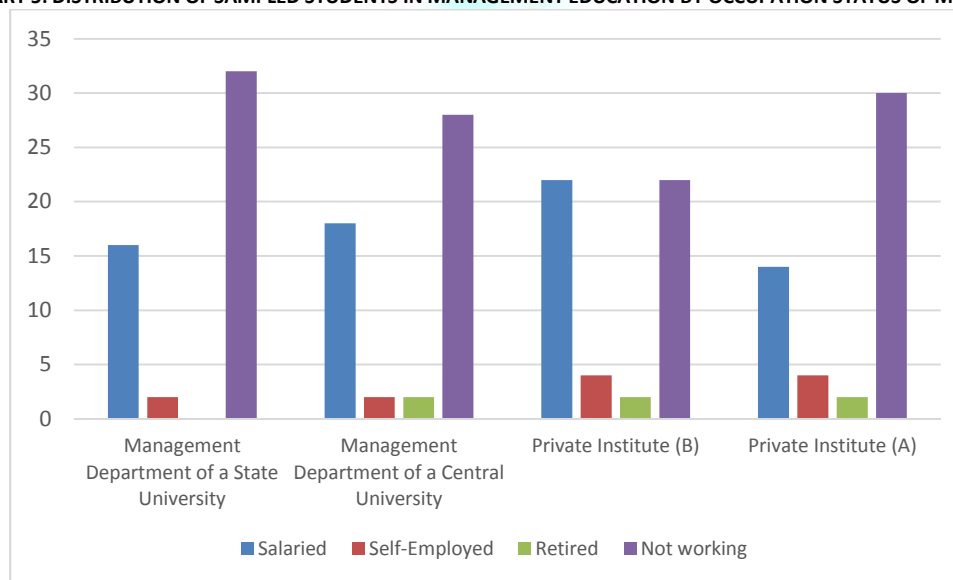
Further analysis of occupation status of Mothers' of sampled students' revealed that majority of mothers' in three Institutes were not working. In Management Department of a State University, 64% were not working, 32% were salaried. Only 4% of women were self-employed. In Management Department of a Central University, 56% were not working, 36% were salaried, 4% were self-employed and 4% were retired. In Private Institute (B), however 44% of the mothers were salaried, 44% of mothers were not working, 8% were self-employed and 4% were retired. In Private Institute (A), 60% of mothers were self-employed, 28% were salaried, 8% were self-employed and 4% were retired. (Kindly refer to Table 5). It can be construed from above results that majority of the students in three Institutes belonged to single member earning family.

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY OCCUPATION STATUS OF MOTHER

Name of the Institute	Salaried	Self-Employed	Retired	Not working	Response Count
Management Department of a State University	16 (32)	2 (4)	0	32 (64)	50 (100)
Management Department of a Central University	18 (36)	2 (4)	2 (4)	28 (56)	50 (100)
Private Institute (B)	22 (44)	4 (8)	2 (4)	22 (44)	50 (100)
Private Institute (A)	14 (28)	4 (8)	2 (4)	30 (60)	50 (100)

\*Figure in bracket indicates percentage

CHART 5: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY OCCUPATION STATUS OF MOTHER



##### 5. FAMILY INCOME OF THE STUDENTS PURSUING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS

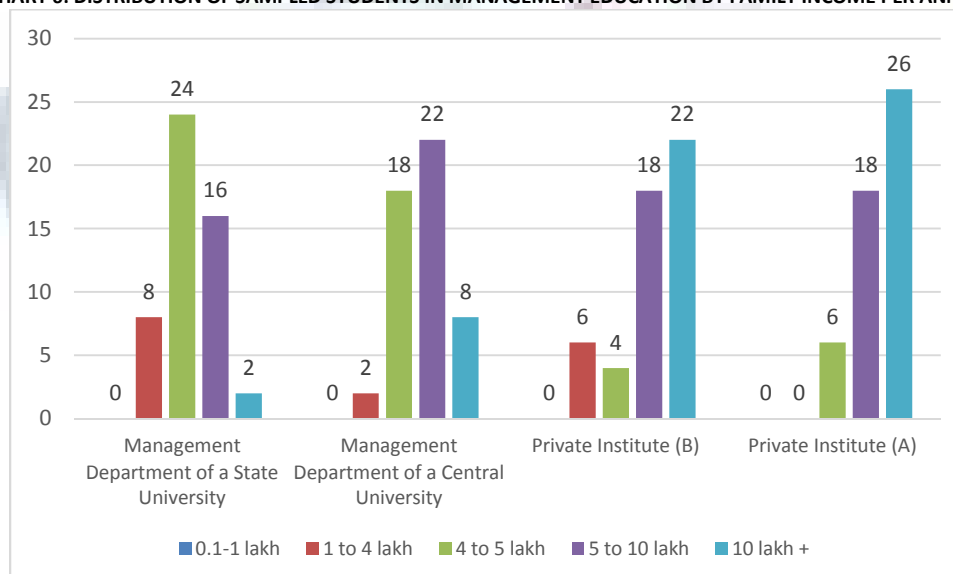
Family income is assessed to gain an understanding about economic status of the sample students. It can be seen in Table 6, that majority of sample students in university run departments fall under 4-5 and 5-10 income bracket. In private Institutions, that majority of sampled students in university run departments fall under 5-10 and 10 + income bracket.

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY FAMILY INCOME PER ANNUM

Name of the Institute	0.1-1 lakh	1 to 4 lakh	4 to 5 lakh	5 to 10 lakh	10 lakh +	Response Count
Management Department of a State University	0 (0)	8 (16)	24 (48)	16 (32)	2 (4)	50
Management Department of a Central University	0 (0)	2 (4)	18 (36)	22 (44)	8 (16)	50
Private Institute (B)	0 (0)	6 (12)	4 (8)	18 (36)	22 (44)	50
Private Institute (A)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (12)	18 (36)	26 (52)	50

\*Figure in bracket indicates percentage

CHART 6: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLED STUDENTS IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION BY FAMILY INCOME PER ANNUM



Thus it can be interpreted that students of private Institutions on an average were from middle income background i.e. the beneficiaries of management education are majorly middle and upper middle class in both public and private institutions. Thus, the access of management education is limited to a particular section of society not only in private institutions but also in public institutions.

## FINDINGS

- Majority of the sample students in all sample Institutions belong to Metropolitan city.** In management department of state university, 84% students belong to Metropolitan city and 16% of the students belong to town. In case of management department of central university, 68% of the sampled students are from metro, 32% of the students are from town background. In case of private Institutes (B) and (A), 64% and 76% of sampled students respectively belong to Metropolitan city and 36% and 24% respectively belong to towns.
- Majority of sample students pursuing their post-graduation in Management belong to General category.** In Management department of state university (96%), Management department of central university (88%), Private institution (B) (76%) and Private institution (A) (22%) belong to General category. There was no ST among sampled students. SC and OBC also constituted a very small percentage with 0% and 4% (1 student) respectively in Management department of state university, 8% and 4% respectively in management department of central university, 2% and 4% in Private institution (B), 3% and 2% in Private institution (A).
- Occupation division of sampled students' father revealed that majority of the sample students have steady stream of income.** Father of majority of sampled students were service men (government/private) and a very little portion of students' father were retired or not working
- Occupation status of Mothers' of sampled students' revealed that majority of mothers' in three Institutes were not working.** In management department of state university, 64% were not working, 32% were salaried. Only 4% of women were self-employed. In management department of central university, 56% were not working, 36% were salaried, 4% were self-employed and 4% were retired. In Private institution (B), however 44% of the mothers were salaried, 44% of mothers were not working, 8% were self-employed and 4% were retired. In Private institution (A), 60% of mothers were self-employed, 28% were salaried, 8% were self-employed and 4% were retired.
- Majority of sample students pursuing management education were from middle class background.** Majority of sampled students in three Institutes fall under 5-10 lakh income bracket. The exception is management department of state university, where majority of sampled students fall under 4-5 lakh income bracket. (As per a study by National Council for Applied Economic Research's (NCAER) Centre for Macro Consumer Research, a family with an annual income between Rs. 3.4 lakh to Rs. 17 lakh (at 2009-10 price levels) falls in the middle class category.)

**Thus in both sample private institutions and University management departments, access of management education is limited to middle income group living in metropolitan city belonging to general category.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations have been generated from the study which can improve the access of management education in India:

- Policy should be formulated to improve access of Management Education by providing subsidies and grants to poor section of society.
- Differential fee should be charged from students with different economic background. Otherwise subsidies are absorbed by group of society who do not need them.
- Flexible loan schemes should be made available to the needy meritorious students.
- Scholarships should be provided to needy and meritorious students to pursue their education in private institutions.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Four Institutions selected for the study belong to Delhi region and only one institution from each category is taken for in depth analysis. It would have been good to have more number of institutions for the study.
- Sample selected for assessing socio-economic background of the students consists of only 200 respondents i.e. 50 from each Institution. The researcher could not gather more responses because of reluctance of students to fill questionnaire and share information about their background.

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- This study focussed on only two private Institutions and two University departments. Also the selected Institutes were from Delhi region. The study can be extended to other management institutions also.
- As mentioned in the first chapter, 200 Alumni were questioned about their Institute i.e. 50 from each Institute. Thus there is a room for verifying these findings with a larger sample.

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