

Making a case for India Inc

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MUMBAI

THOUGH India Inc's prominence in global business has increased manifold in the last decade, it is not reflected in the curricula of the country's top-notch business schools. To teach subjects like marketing, finance or organisational behaviour, B-schools still rely more on case studies of companies abroad than successful Indian entities. But that's likely to change. Recently, a group of professors from IIM-Bangalore (IIMB) and ISB, Hyderabad kick-started a collaboration with the Canada-based Richard Ivey School of Business, to develop case studies in the Indian context.

"We need more Indian case studies to bring out the distinctiveness of Indian companies, their strategies and management approaches," says Rishikesh T Krishnan, professor of corporate strategy and policy at IIMB, and member of the team that will carry out research in categories like leadership, entrepreneurship and general management and health service delivery.

Arif Kachra, assistant professor of strategy and general management at Ivey, says though India has seen a mushrooming of companies, B-schools in the West have not been able to tap into the reasons for this, mainly because of a lack of case studies. "Our distribution network across the globe will be used to market Indian case studies abroad," he says. This year, IIMB has set aside ₹20 lakh for its faculty to write up cases. "We plan to come up with 25 high-quality cases this year, in all functional areas of management," says Dinesh Kumar, chairperson of research and publications at IIMB.

Ivey is also partnering with ISB to train and support faculty on how to draw up such case studies. Savita Mahajan, associate dean, strategic initiatives and admissions, says ISB is hosting a case-writing competition to build a collection of high-quality, internationally-benchmarked cases from India Inc. Students in the top B-schools typically go through more than 400 cases during their two-year

tenure. Professors say such case studies serve as an effective tool for discovery and learning in the classroom, though Hariharan Sriram, a second-year student at IIM Calcutta (IIMC), says for a subject like marketing, which is localised in nature, the learning from a foreign case study can, at best, be limited.

Prof Praful Agnihotri of IIM Calcutta (IIMC), who co-authored the latest Pearson publication, entitled Principles of Marketing, with Prof Philip Kotler, feels there are some excellent cases on Indian business situations which can be used in MBA courses. He cites the example of brands like Anchor White toothpaste and Ghadi detergent, which have become market leaders despite competition from multinational players.

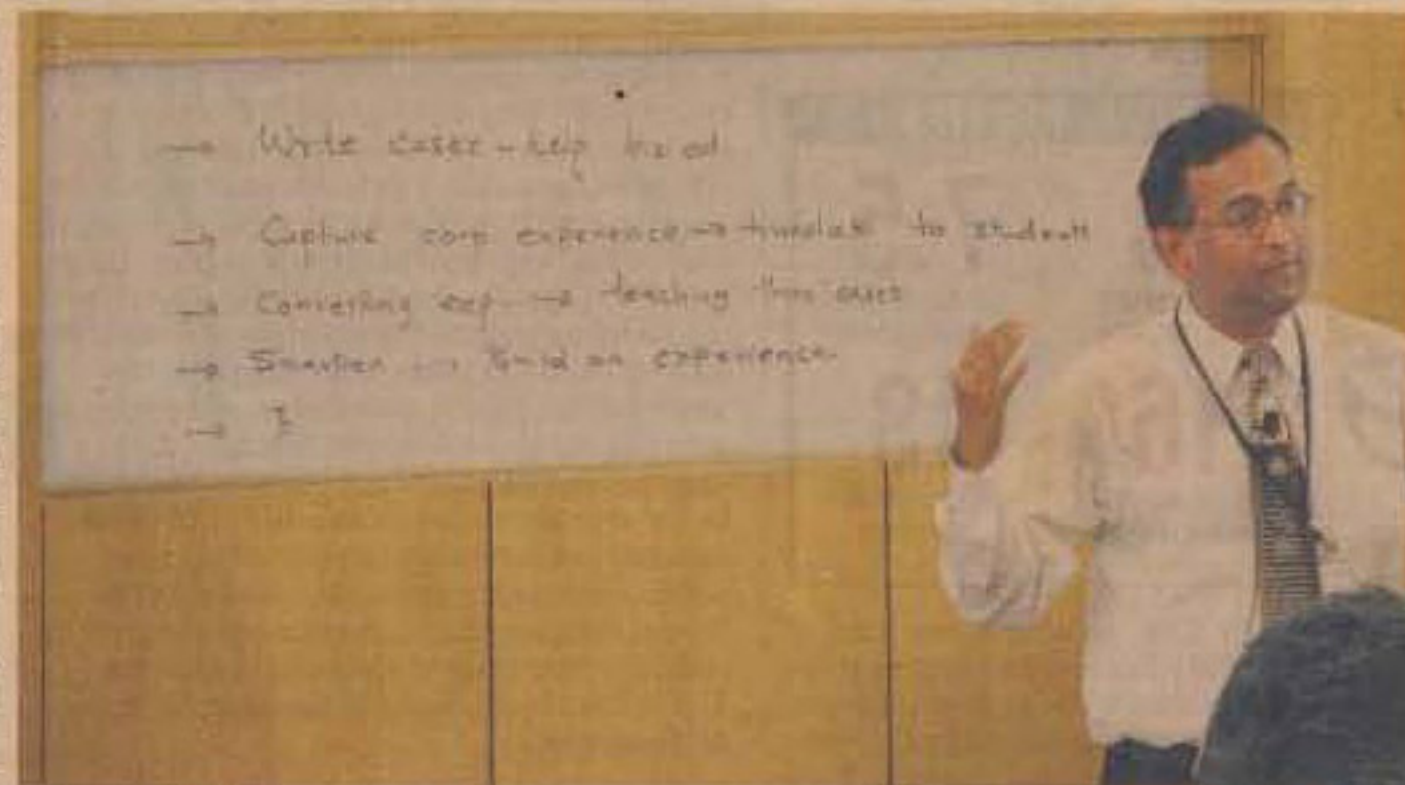
However, the lack of case studies is not the same across subjects taught in a B-school. For instance, Prof Agnihotri says he did not face a problem locating marketing-related examples while working on his book, but cannot say the same of case studies relating to other subjects like international finance. "The curriculum would benefit tremendously from cases in the Indian context (like currency hedging in export-oriented sectors like textiles and IT) particularly since the rupee has done a roller-coaster against the dollar in the last few years," says Rajesh Chakrabarti, assistant professor of finance at ISB.

Still, not many companies are open to sharing details for good case studies, which somewhat explains the lacuna in Indian cases studies. Amit Mookerjee, professor of marketing at IIM Lucknow, says India needs to have stronger ties between academics and industry. There is now also a move to have the various IIMs create a common forum to write and clear cases.



WE NEED MORE INDIAN CASE STUDIES TO BRING OUT THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF INDIAN COMPANIES, THEIR STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

RISHIKESHA T KRISHNAN
PROFESSOR, IIMB



(Top) A case-writing workshop in progress at ISB, Hyderabad and (below) faculty from various B-schools meet to discuss how to draw up case studies in the Indian context