

Preface

This book has been in the making for a long time. In fact, the idea for the book emerged during our participation in a two-day convention on “Management Education in India” held on November 14–15, 2010, at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC) to mark the inauguration of its year-long Golden Jubilee celebrations. Both of us were relatively new to the IIM system, having been around only for 2–3 years as newly recruited faculty members at the institution. Both of us had come from the mainstream university system. Also, both of us belonged to historically well-established academic disciplines (law and sociology) with undefined relevance for management curriculum. Yet, we were overwhelmed by the encouraging collegiality that we found in the working of the institute. For us, it was quite refreshing to be part of a less hierarchical and largely egalitarian community of peers. We were eager to know almost everything that our institute did or intended to do. We would zealously participate in all the meetings held at the institute—big and small, formal and informal, fresher’s welcome and farewell parties, research seminars and teatime gossip, big conferences and thinly attended lectures. In a way, we wanted to make sense of our vocation, our institutional location, our academic and professional engagements and the ways in which we could realize institutional expectations as well as our individual aspirations.

The convention exposed us to diverse range of views concerning management education. These views came from different stakeholders from the worlds of academia, business and industries, and the government. And the views often did not converge and at times, discordant voices added to our existing confusion. For example, we did not know how to react to Deepak Nayyar’s (a former professor of IIM Calcutta) plea for aligning management education with the need for continual scholarly scrutiny of contemporary capitalism as it evolves over time and space. Or for that matter, Barun De’s (the eminent historian and a former professor of business environment at IIM Calcutta) idea of a management institute being the site for collective resistance to the hegemony of the American business school curriculum. Or Ishwar Dayal’s (a former professor of IIM Ahmedabad) unrepentant advocacy for distinctive paths for individual institutes in synch with its context and milieu.

Questions of similar nature made us realize the multidimensional nature of management education and its contested claims. We thought it would be prudent to engage with these issues in a much more collaborative fashion. That is when the ideal of the book took shape. When we shared our idea with colleagues at the institute, we found them quite encouraging. To our pleasant surprise, we found in them more than mere contributors to the volume. They were intellectually involved in the project as a whole. They deserve our gratitude for making it happen.

Ajit Balakrishnan, Chairperson, Board of Governors of IIM Calcutta, graciously accepted our request to write a foreword to this volume. We are grateful to him for his support. We thank Saibal Chattopadhyay, Director, IIM Calcutta, for his constant encouragement.

Anindya Sen, Biju Paul Abraham and Rajesh Bhattacharya were generous with their time in reviewing of some of the chapters. We owe very much to our colleagues and students at IIM Calcutta for keeping us intellectually engaged with some of the questions that we have attempted to address in this volume.

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