

## 1: harimohan paruvu: Dr. Rajendra Nargundkar – an expert’s advise for MBAs

*I am an Instructor of Marketing Research. I have been using this book to teach my students and I always advice them to use this book. It is really an excellent book to self study as it is very easy to understand with lot of case studies.*

Tuesday, December 7, Dr. From Clemson University, South Carolina in the late s. Nargundkar is one of the names to reckon with in the Indian management arena and is an author, scholar, academic, golfer and quite the creative genius. He is the right mix of academics and work experience, having begun his career with New Horizons, Delhi, an advertising agency belonging to the India Today group and then with Marketing and Business Associates, Bangalore before he left to the USA for his Ph. D, he taught at Lander College in South Carolina before returning to a career in academics in India in All this in a career spanning over 25 years, 2 decades of which are in the area of management. While at this, he has also authored three books – Marketing Research, Services Marketing and International Marketing – all the books have been well received in the Indian market due to their simple and effective way of explaining these concepts with Indian case studies. In fact when he wrote these books, there were few books on these subjects by Indian authors and fewer with Indian case studies. Another one, Brand Management, co-authored by a former colleague Ms. Bhagyalakshmi Venkatesh, is due for publication. A man of many passions, he plays golf very seriously these days, loves watching movies, blogging, and listening to old Hindi music. But most of all he loves a good laugh as several people who know him will readily testify. Considering his vast experience in meeting and observing students, faculty, systems, recruiters in India and abroad – I asked him a few questions which might help those who aspire to do their MBA or even for those who are already pursuing their MBAs. Here then is an interview from a man who has pretty much seen it all and says it like it is. How does an MBA degree or diploma add value to a graduate? Is it better than merely studying regular streams? A good B school certainly adds value. Most undergraduate programs are not serious in India and do not provide any kind of finishing or personality development to the student. This includes engineering colleges. B schools also provide opportunities to the students to do group work, make presentations and get critiqued. And beyond all this, it is up to the student to add value through other activities while on campus. Is there any particular orientation you look for in students who want to pursue an MBA? When I ask most students why they want to do an MBA they do not give me convincing answers. They should at least prepare themselves to the extent that they give evidence on why we should consider them. I certainly expect some preparation like subject knowledge and reading up some business magazines to know what is going on. What expectations can students have from an MBA course in India? An MBA certainly boosts long term career prospects. Also helps in personality development which is a good thing anyway. What kind of a preparation do they need to put in to get a good MBA? They have to figure out how to handle the CAT of course. But if they get beyond that, I suggest a lot of general reading with some business reading. The fundamentals should be clear in their discipline. And once they get the B school, they need to prepare for hard work in good business schools. How is a good business school different from a bad one? Quality of faculty is the number one issue. Also systems are in place in good schools to keep pressure on the students to perform. Systems such as relative grading. A residential program helps, which most good B schools have. Good physical infrastructure is a given. But most certainly good intellectual infrastructure such as databases, case studies etc. Is it better to have some job experience before doing an MBA as opposed to a fresh graduate? In my opinion job experience should be made compulsory. Teaching a course like production management, or organizational behavior or MIS to a fresher is tough because they have no idea what it is about. Unless a person has worked for a while in an organization it is difficult to visualize. I would say a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 8 years of work experience is the best band. How can a student get the best out of a 2 year course in MBA? Focus on their strengths and do well in them. Give equal importance to academics and extra- curricular activities. Do well in whatever they are doing. Two years is a longtime. Also they should network with alumni, guest speakers and faculty, which comes in handy later on. Students could do well to plan their career if possible. Select electives carefully and be the best in whatever you have chosen. Play some games and sports. If you break that habit it is difficult to

get back. It is a good thing to do throughout life. You have seen MBAs abroad and here. What is the difference in approach? Most students abroad go for an MBA after some work experience. They also pay for it themselves and hence they are a lot more serious in the classroom. They apply themselves seriously and do not resort to plagiarism, as it is looked down upon. The Indian student has high IQ, but is prone to take short cuts and has low application levels and low motivation levels. Is there any difference between students at IIMs and other B schools? I have found good ones everywhere and not just in the IIMs. Some of the best were in small class sizes – of size which appears ideal. Peer group pressure, good faculty and perceived rewards to which students look forward to - makes them stand out from others. How do Indian MBAs compare with those abroad? At least the top B schools are the same. Average ones in India are poor. Class sizes abroad are smaller, , which gives them an advantage. Except for few like Harvard which has class sizes of Also a diverse set of students-- global diversity adds to the growth which is missing here. I would recommend a course abroad for anyone who can afford it if they have not got admission in a good B school. There is too much focus on placement. How justified is this approach? And how do students maximize their chances in getting placed on campus? We have reached a stage when we can outsource placement. There are enough HR consultants to do that job. One reason why this has happened is that B schools started branding themselves with placement. Now with B schools in India it is difficult to attract enough companies. Top schools succeed, remaining do not get enough attention from companies. The first-job emphasis is too much now - where returns may not be too high immediately. But long term benefits are high. Not too much attention is being paid to this aspect. On placement – is it better that the students choose jobs that fit their profiles or should they go for any job that comes their way? My advise on placement to students would be to look for the first job as a two year passport to the next job. Look for a minimum of everything you need in the first job – brand equity, salary and learning opportunity. I recommend growth industries and small companies as well for those seeking to maximize their long terms career opportunities. What do recruiters expect from MBAs? What is the feedback you have received from recruiters? Attitude, communication skills, technical skills. Recruiters find students under prepared. Industry knowledge and company knowledge is missing. Some preparation in that respect is required. Other than that they are okay. If you were to list 5 things that students need to really work on during the time spent on campus before going out to industry, what would they be? I sometimes wonder that with all the inputs students get, they seem to miss the forest for the trees. I find that they lack a basic understanding of the subjects, clarity and application of basic concepts is lacking. Core concepts are usually forgotten by the time they pass out.

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