Chapter – 1

Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study detailing the popularity of the MBA programme, history and the current scenario of management education, and the theoretical framework of the topic. It also discusses the research on career advancement and the focus of the present study.

1.1. Popularity of MBA

Higher education - the area a young individual decides to graduate/post-graduate in - is perhaps one of the most important choices a person makes during his/her lifetime. A choice at this juncture determines the course of one of the largest investments in terms of time, money and commitment a person could make. Such an important decision needs considerable thinking on the part of the individual. 'Why do I want to do this educational programme?' is a question that needs to be answered. At a later point in life, some individuals may feel repentance on his/her wrong choice of higher education at the degree/P.G. level. The 'too-late' realisation with a feeling of disillusionment is a direct outcome of unconsidered early-life decisions relating to higher education and subsequent career/profession. When faced with the question of what to do in life, the result usually may fall into two categories: He/she may do what others want him/her to do or do what everybody around him/her seems to be doing. The compulsion to get into one field of study or another field of study usually comes from the individual's parents or / and people around him/her. This may happen especially in the case of professional courses.

If we ask any MBA aspirant why he/she wants to do MBA, the answers may follow predictable lines. Usually, everyone wants to work in a multinational/national company and earn a fat salary, or is preparing for it since friends are into it. A few may actually know what to expect from the profession. Almost everybody talks of a cousin or friend who has made it big in some company or the other. It may be noted that the average student and even people in other professions and jobs have caught the MBA bug. When earning money has become the central objective of life, people may not stick in a career of their own interest and aptitude.
Some people do engineering because their parents wanted them to, but later they find that higher positions in management are grabbed by MBAs. An additional MBA degree may give them the qualification to work at higher levels in multinational/national companies and live a decent life. In other words, an MBA degree in addition to engineering or other degree is a detour in career advancement. Thousands of students, including engineers from the premier institutes like the IITs, want to get into management for this reason. One often wonders why some of the brightest people in the country are opting for marketing profession, sacrificing their talent and years of hard work and education in a different profession.

Career growth, managerial skills and increased earnings are perhaps the most common reasons given for pursuing an MBA. An MBA degree may help to achieve a major breakthrough in one's career path accompanied with a jump in income. Many MBAs with engineering background may start with that ambition. A management qualification requires enormous investment of effort and money. To maximise the return on that, one should think carefully about his/her own objective in seeking an MBA and the type of course that is most likely to enable one to meet those objectives.

Increasing business activity and the predominant shortage of well-trained managers for industry make the MBA tag a prestigious and a well-paying one. Advancement automatically comes with efficiency and a hard-working attitude. The reputation of a good management school can get him/her a challenging job in a good organisation; but to stay there and to move on requires a combination of professional and personal skills along with a need to develop emotional quotient (EQ).

But an MBA by itself may not guarantee high career advancement in the profession unless he/she has certain skills, attitudes, and ambitions and goal orientation to move up. An MBA without these qualities may get stuck in the onward journey and his/her contributions to the job may sadly be mediocre.

The MBA, however, may build up expectations and everybody thinks he/she is fit to work in a higher profession preferably in a multinational company. Not everyone may find such a job, and this may leave a trail of frustration behind. Ironically, it seems that
there is huge unemployment in the country and still it is difficult to find a good manager/executive.

Multinationals, or for that matter any employer, require people who can ‘add value’. A diploma or a degree by itself does not add value. It is added by an understanding of the situation and taking intelligent decisions. Highly paid jobs require this more than anything else. A person who does not have talent for this is bound to be left behind.

Choosing and managing a career requires more serious thinking than many of us are willing to admit. First is the question of aptitude. It is necessary not to be overwhelmed by stories of high salaries that others are getting, since each profession offers the possibility to earn more than others. The most highly paid professionals in the country, for instance, may not be MBAs. A good doctor or a fashion designer or a cine actor would be able to earn more money. Some famous designers and cardiologists may earn more than most MBAs.

MBA graduates are a significant part of the talent pool for corporate leadership. Major corporations and firms compete to fill entry-level management positions with graduates of top-tier business schools. Campus recruitment programmes are characterised by student selectivity, reputation for quality among business school, programme directors, and placement strategies adopted by B-schools. Thus, the popularity of the MBA programme is not only based on the quality of education, but also other factors as mentioned above.

Kane(1993) found that recruiters prefer MBAs for corporate jobs. Companies are seemed to be very happy with the skills today's MBAs possess -- MBAs from good B-schools. Such MBAs have a rare mix of conceptual, technical, interpersonal and communication skills. Espey and Batchelor(1987) had identified in their study that MBAs improve a company’s effectiveness in both the short and long-term. In this context, it may be noted that oft repeated complaints by the Human Resource selection specialists are relating to inadequate holistic development of skills or rather mix of skills of graduates and professionals. In 1997, Eberhardt found that, in spite of several criticisms hurled at MBA degree holders, firms are still hiring them. He found out that 78% of Human Resource
Managers had employed MBAs in their organisations. Also, he observed that employers were most satisfied with MBAs’ leadership potential.

There seems to be mass migration towards management education, with mushroom growth of management schools churning MBAs out for managerial positions. The more the concentration in one stream of education, the greater may be the inefficiency and inequality among people who are not homogenous in quality. There are a number of failures who would have performed better had they chosen their career in rational way. It seems that the tendency to conform to the herd is now more pronounced in the choice of MBA for employment and career advancement.

Now-a-days there are large number of women MBA students. However this was not the case during 1970’s and 80’s in India. According to a joint study released in 2000 by Catalyst, the University of Michigan Business School, and the Center for the Education of Women at the University of Michigan, female enrollment at top business schools averages 30 percent, while it is 44% in medical and law schools. The study suggests that there are obstacles to more women taking advantage of the opportunity an MBA provides. This study indicates that the business school environment is better for women than conventional wisdom suggests, and this survey concludes that business schools and business careers are not perceived by many women to be in line with their personal and professional goals. In the present study, it may be noted that only 15% of women MBA students were there in the School of Management Studies, CUSAT, during the period 1973 to 1984. But today the number of women students in the MBA class in the School of Management Studies, CUSAT, is around 40%. This pattern observed in the School of Management Studies is likely to be the same in other B-schools too. Women account for 50% in the engineering colleges as well as in the software training sectors (Krishnan, 2005).

Male and female may have clear different reasons for obtaining an MBA degree. While both may pursue an MBA to increase earning potential, the commonality ends there. Men may obtain an MBA for networking and preparation for entrepreneurship and advancement while women may hope that an MBA will gain them additional career
opportunities and acceptability in the workplace. Simpson et al. (2005) say that men tend to gain the extrinsic benefits of increased salary and managerial status, women tend to gain the intrinsic benefits of enhanced confidence, credibility, and job satisfaction.

Additionally, long-term career goals for male and female MBAs may also differ. Men acquiring an MBA may aspire to become president or CEO of both public and private companies or to start their own businesses. Women MBAs, however, may rank management consulting, executive level vice-president positions and executive managers in not-for-profit organisations high among their career goals. The level of professional aspiration of women could be less than that of men even after their MBA (Heaton et al., 2000). Coe (1992); Rycroft (1989) have found those women tends to be concentrated into a narrow range of support functions such as administration, personnel management and education. In her study, Simpson (1995) found great differences between men and women MBAs, with men experiencing a greater swing in achieving senior positions.

For women, career advancement challenges still remain. A poll by www.careerwomen.com, a sister site to www.mbacareers.com, revealed that women at all levels in an organisation are still experiencing tough barriers to advancement in the workplace. The survey pointed out that corporate culture favoured men, excluded women from informal networks, perceived that family will interfere with work and consequences of all these there is a lack of women serving in Board level positions and in senior management. Work-life balance is difficult for women as children, aging parents, and home responsibilities all seem to be their life issues.

Now-a-days the work place seems to be a new world of its own with the focus on competition and sidetracking of those who are weak in their performance. The choice of moving up, standing still or moving out solely depends on the individuals. To have a sense of purpose in life, individuals need to draw up their definitions of success rather than becoming victims to the psychology of the herd. There is no denying that an MBA degree may open doors to a plethora of opportunities. For many purposes, an MBA may be the fastest road between where one is now and where he/she wants to go.
1.2. Historical background of Management Education: Worldwide

The first university level business school was established at Wurttemberg in 1782. In 1852, a B-school was founded in Antwerp (Belgium) which became the prototype for similar institutions in France and Italy (Varghese, 1992). Antwerp’s tradition of management education at university level dates back to 1852. One hundred and fifty years of pioneering, innovation and experience have thus ensured that University of Antwerp Management School’s (UAMS) management training is firmly anchored in the local and international business community. The UAMS integrates all postgraduate and executive management programmes of the University of Antwerp (www.uams.be).

One of the oldest business schools in Europe is considered to be the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce in Paris (ESCP). ESCP was founded in 1819. Presently it is called as ESCP-EAP (also known as "European School of Management"). In Europe, although the Leipzig Graduate School of Management was founded in 1898, it initially taught at the undergraduate level only.

The MBA designation originated in the United States and became popular all over the world. Business organisations sought out professional approaches in managing their affairs. Master of Business Administration (MBA) is a P.G. degree in business management education. Scheme of studies and syllabi reveal that basically MBA degree is a multi-disciplinary academic programme directed towards professionalisation of management. Completion of MBA degree does not preclude admission to a doctoral programmes primarily catering to another profession, i.e. teaching. However, the main thrust is on the practice of professional management, which involves skills, attitudes and behavioural styles in addition to knowledge in several disciplines.

A business school is a university-level institution that teaches subjects such as accounting, finance, marketing, organisational behavior, HRM, business law, operations management, strategy and quantitative methods in addition to several specialised subjects within each functional or sectoral streams. The institutions imparting management education have different names that include schools of ‘business’, ‘business administration’, and ‘management’. Most of the B-schools are labelled as ‘Institute’,
'Faculty', 'College', 'School', 'Department'(within university) or 'Centre' and teach predominantly business courses. The first such 'collegiate business school' was Wharton School founded in 1881 for undergraduate programme in the University of Pennsylvania(initially as an exclusive undergraduate programme specialising in finance). In North America a business school is often understood to be a university graduate school which offers Master of Business Administration(MBA) or equivalent degree.

Tuck School of Business, a part of Dartmouth College, was the first graduate(MBA) school of management in the world. Founded in 1900, it was the first institution to confer advanced degrees(Masters) in commercial sciences, the forebearer of the modern MBA. Dartmouth College founded in 1769 is the ninth-oldest college in the United States. Harvard University followed suit in 1908, with a programme titled Master in Business Administration. Since then, B-schools in United States have largely dominated management education. The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business was the first business school to offer a Ph.D.(Wikipedia,2006).

In 1881 the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris founded École des Hautes Études Commerciales(HEC) as one of the first business schools in France. In 1969, HEC started the HEC MBA programme. In 1898 the University of St.Gallen was also founded as one of the first business schools in Europe. As the US MBA model emerged at the turn of the 20th century. Europeans developed centres of excellence in business, such as at the universities of London and Manchester. Elsewhere in Europe, companies started management programmes, such as Cass Business School, London, Henley Management College and Ashridge to provide management training for promising employees.

France pioneered one-year MBA programmes, with INSEAD MBA in 1959. University-based French business schools were created since then (mostly in the 1990s) their own 12 to 24-month MBA programmes, but with a much lower emphasis on internationalisation and diversity.

MBA programmes in the UK differ from those in the United States, in that students typically have significantly more work and managerial experience than their American counterparts. Because of this, many full-time MBA programmes in the UK typically last
one academic year. London Business School was established in 1965, is an international business school providing postgraduate degrees in finance and management, including MBA (Master of Business Administration) programmes, as well as non-degree courses for business executives.

Few people are aware that South Africa was home to the first MBA outside of the USA. The Graduate School of Management at the University of Pretoria (GSM) was founded in 1949 and two years later, 25 graduates received their MBA degrees – the first to be awarded by a non-American university. In 1968, the Asian Institute of Management was founded in Manila.

In earlier days the focus of business education was more vocational rather than professional. Former businessmen constituted the faculty, and their classes were more about learning from their own stories rather than science based academic theories. As the economy grew more complex and the demands on business corporations increased, there was a push towards gearing MBAs with more ‘science’ believed locked in theories and models. Conversely, today, there is criticism that professors teaching MBA courses lack real-world experience in their field of teaching - that their theorems and scientific hypotheses fail to reflect what's demanded in today's market (Ching, 2005).

MBA schools also known as B-schools vary in their orientations, approaches, teaching methodologies and popularity. No wonder that there is considerable competition among the B-schools of today. Rating and ranking have become a popular game among magazine publishers, fuelling a spirit of unhealthy competition among the B-schools. Some MBA programmes are being amended to move with the times. Others are remaining very still. Knowing which is doing what would be a good idea for any potential enrollee (Ching, 2005).

In the United States, by one estimate, the average cost of earning an MBA via an accredited full-time programme (excluding room and board) rose from $124,000 in 1993 to $162,000 in 2001 (Davies and Cline, 2005). The bulk of the cost is in the form of foregone earnings ($109,000 in 1993 and $139,000 in 2001). Accounting for the decrease in expected unemployment as well as the increase in expected wages and expected wage
growth, the financial benefits in holding an MBA degree are equivalent to an 18% rate of return on the cost of the degree (Davies and Cline, 2005).

U.S. has currently 1600 B-schools, producing, 1,00,000 MBAs every year. Management education industry is a $800 b industry in USA. Economists believe the growth in management education is a barometer of growth in economy (Sinha, 2004). In North America and Europe, the central theme of change in many of the business schools is the internationalisation of management education (Philip, 2004). Maldives and Bhutan have recently established Management Development Institute (MDI) but they are yet to establish graduate B-Schools (Sinha, 2004).

1.3. Management education in India

Indian management education system is the second largest in the world today, next only to that of U.S. But here again, in terms of number of B-Schools it has already caught up with the U.S., overtaken Europe, and is slowly inching towards catching up with U.S., in terms of MBA production. Its growth in the last 40 years has been phenomenal. Many of us who grew up with the Indian management education system feels proud at its achievement, recognition and popularity (Philip, 2004).

Founded in the early 1960s under the leadership of Prof. A. Dasgupta, The Department of Business Administration of the University of Delhi was the first institute in the country to offer a three year Post Graduate Diploma in Management on a part-time basis for senior and middle level executives. This department has its origin in 1954 in the Delhi School of Economics. Andhra University was the first University in the country to start a full-time Master’s Programme in Business Administration (MBA) in 1957 in its Department of Commerce.

The first ‘B-School’ in India was the Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management (IISWBM), Kolkata (at inception known as All India Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management) was set up in 1958 and headed by Prof. D.K. Sanyal. It was created through a resolution adopted by the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta on April 25, 1953. IISWBM introduced the first programme on management education in India. The foundation stone was laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first
Prime Minister of India. It was created in response to a strongly felt need of independent India. The Institute had, as its midwives, the Ministry of Scientific and Cultural Affairs(Government of India), All India Board of Technical Studies in Management(Ministry of Education), Government of West Bengal, Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Bharat Chamber of Commerce, and Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Initially, IISWBM offered a three year part-time Diploma in Industrial Management(DIM) for employed technical personnel, and a three year part-time Diploma in Business Administration(DBA) for employed non-technical personnel on the recommendation of All India Board of Technical Studies in Management. Now, the institute, apart from Masters in Business Administration(MBA) and Master in Human Resource Management(MHRM), runs courses on Public Systems Management (PSM), P.G.Diploma in Business Management(PGDBM), P.G.Diploma in Sports Management (PGDSM), P.G.Diploma in Transport Management(PGDTM), P.G.Diploma in Environment Management(PGDEM), P.G.Diploma in Energy management(PGDEM), P.G.Diploma in Hospital management(PGDHM), P.G.Diploma in Travel & Tourism Industry Management(PGDTTIM), P.G.Diploma in Enterprise Software and Management System(PGDESMS), and P.G.Diploma in Bio-Informatics(PGDBI) along with Management Development Programmes(MDPs) and Entrepreneurial Development Programmes(EDPs).

Government of India established the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) in Hyderabad in the year 1956 on the recommendation of All India Council for Technical Education. This institute became the first of its kind in the country for training top level officers and managers of India. Ever since it was established in 1956 at the initiative of government and the corporate world, ASCI has synthesised managerial theory and practice to equip corporate managers, administrators, entrepreneurs and academicians to effectively respond to the ever-increasing complexity of managerial issues confronting government, industrial enterprises and non-government organisations, rather than end up as victims of outcomes. For over four and a half decades, ASCI’s synergistic blend of management development [training], consultancy and research has set the pace for professionalisation of management in India. Also, it offers a post-graduate training
programme in hospital administration in collaboration with Hinduja Foundation and MBA in collaboration with Manchester Business School through distance learning.

In addition to IISWBM, Kolkatta and Delhi University, four universities viz. namely Bajaj Institute of Management (Bombay University), Panjab University, Madras University, and Kerala University (Present SMS, CUSAT) were also given approval for starting the part-time programme in management in their University Management Departments. All these departments were functioning in full swing till these diploma programmes were converted into three-year part-time MBA programme along with two-year full-time MBA programme.

The IIMs were not the pioneers of management education in India; they were preceded by Department of Commerce of Andhra University (for full-time MBA in 1957), the four metropolitan universities of Bombay (Mumbai), Delhi, Calcutta (Kolkatta) and Madras (Chennai). The best known of these are the Faculty of Management Studies in Delhi University and the Bajaj Institute of Management in Bombay. The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIM-C) was established as the first national institute in November 1961 in collaboration with Alfred P. Sloan School of Management (MIT) and with the supports of Government of West Bengal, The Ford Foundation and Indian industry. The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) was set up at Ahmedabad in 1961 as an autonomous body with the active support of the Government of India, Government of Gujarat, and industry. During its formative years IIM-A had academic collaboration with Harvard Business School. IIM-A, under the influence of HBS, pioneered the case study methodology of teaching in India. The IIM-C and IIM-A started diploma programmes in management with the duration of one year with the intake of experienced candidates as students. Later, the duration of the PGDM programme was made two years, and all graduates were given opportunity for admission after going through the rigorous selection procedure. Other four IIMs—Bangalore (1973), Lucknow (1984), Kozhikode (1996) and Indore (1998) - were started in due course.

Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI) was founded in 1949 by Fr. Quinn Enright, S.J. in the Steel City of Jamshedpur. Over many years XLRI has developed its own identity.


Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) is an autonomous institution with the mandate of contributing to the professional management of rural organisations. It was founded in 1979 at the initiative of the National Dairy Development Board and, the support of Government of India, Government of Gujarat and Swiss Development Cooperation. Ever since its inception, IRMA has been working closely with Co-operatives, NGOs, Governments, and National and International agencies. It offers Post-Graduate Programme in Rural Management (PRM) along with MDPs and consultancy.

Today, India has nearly 1,400 B-schools offering both MBA and PGDM programmes producing more than 1,00,000 graduates. Institutes offering PGDM programmes are autonomous with freedom to design the courses and examination systems, whereas MBA awarding institutions (Universities/Colleges affiliated to universities) do not have such freedom. So, it is quite natural that autonomous PGDM institutions are rated high by the surveys conducted by several agencies. This fact is often ignored by many in the popular ranking/rating exercises conducted by authorised/unauthorised agencies. However, students are often guided by such popular ranking and wide publicity through media by private enterprises in business education.

Master’s Programme in Management (MBA) was launched by the Banaras Hindu University in 1968. In 1990 it launched the Master of International Business Administration (MIBA) Programme. Table No. 1.1 shows the growth of B-Schools in India. At present there are around 1400 B-Schools in India.
Table 1.1
Growth of B-schools in India during 1959-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of B-Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>09</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>847</td>
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(Source: Sinha, 2004)

1.4. Management Education in South India
The contribution of the southern states to the development of management education is commendable. Many of the pioneer management institutes are in the south. Both university management departments (UMDs) and other management institutes were/are playing a significant role in spreading the management education. The origin and growth of management education in each south Indian state is briefed below:

Andhra Pradesh:
Andhra University was the first University in the country to start a full-time Master’s Programme in Business Administration (MBA) in 1957.

Osmania University’s Department of Business Management has been conducting a two-year post-graduate programme in Business Management since 1964. It runs the MBA full-time course since 1971. Now, it also runs MBA part-time and P.G.Diploma in functional areas.

Department of Commerce and Business Administration of Nagarjuna University started the MBA full-time course in 1978.
Sri Krishnadevaraya University’s management department ‘Sri Krishnadevaraya Institute of Management’ was started in 1982 to offer MBA full-time.

Department of Commerce and Business Management of Kakatiya University started the MBA full-time programme in 1983.

The School of Business Management of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, was started in 1983 to offer MBA full-time course. Now the School also runs MSIS(Master of Science in Information & Systems Management) and MSBM(Master of Science in Business Management) as part-time courses.

The Centre for Management Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University was started in 1989 to offer MBA full-time Programme.

The ICFAI Business School(IBS), Hyderabad, was established in 1995 by the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India(ICFAI). IBS has a strong and growing presence at the all India level with campuses located at fourteen cities namely Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Dehradun, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune. IBS offers the two year full-time PG Programme in Business Administration and the three year part-time P.G. Programme in Business Administration. It has campuses in abroad also.

The School of Management Studies, University of Hyderabad, was inaugurated in August, 1999. The School offers two-year full-time residential MBA programme.

The Indian School of Business(ISB) established in 2001. The First Post Graduate Programme in Management was launched in July 01, 2001. The ISB is born of a partnership with Kellogg School of Management, The Wharton Business School, and London Business School. Its distinctiveness stems from its unique origin, innovative and model academic programmes, and world-class overall value proposition. The ISB has been funded entirely from private corporations, foundations and individuals.
Goa:
The Department of Management Studies of Goa University was started in 1988 to offer MBA full-time programme.

Goa Institute of Management (GIM) was founded in 1993. The autonomous school is governed by a Board, and offers a full-time PGDBM programme (2 year full-time) and executive programme (3 year part-time).

Karnataka:
The Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Science, established in 1948, is one of the oldest management schools in the country. The Department offers an MBA programme exclusively for engineering graduates since 1999.

The University of Mysore started offering MBA course from 1974 onwards and the task was entrusted to the University’s Commerce Department. Now the course is run by the Department of Studies in Business Administration.

Karnataka University’s (Dharwad) management department ‘Kousali Institute of Management Studies’ (KIMS) was established in 1976 to start the full-time MBA programme.

T.A.Pai Management Institute (TAPMI) was established in 1980. Its PGDM programme is recognised for its innovative curriculum and academic rigour. TAPMI’s autonomous status enables this flexibility. The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) has recognised the TAPMI’s PGDM programme as equivalent to an MBA.

The Department of Business Administration of Mangalore University was started in 1981 to offer full-time MBA programme.

The Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship (XIME), Bangalore was established in June 1991. It offers a full-time PGDBM programme.

The Canara Bank School of Management Studies of Bangalore University was established in 1998 to start the full-time MBA programme.
Pondicherry:
The Department of Management Studies(formerly School of Management), Pondicherry University – a central university- was established in 1986 with special support from UGC. The department offers full-time residential MBA programme since 1986. This Department, under its unit ‘Department of Tourism Studies’ runs MBA(Tourism) providing for a sectoral(viz. Tourism) focus since 1991 with financial support from the Union Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.

Tamil Nadu:
The Department of Management Studies, University of Madras, is one of India’s oldest B-schools. It was established in1960s. The Master of Business Administration(M.B.A) course(both full time and part time) was started in early 1970s. Research Programmes of the department began in 1975-76.

Thiagarajar School of Management(TSM), Madurai has established in the southern part of India as one of the premier B-Schools. TSM was founded in 1962, initially to provide quality management education for working executives and entrepreneurs. The success of this programme resulted in the inception of a part time MBA programme in 1972 followed by the full time MBA programme from 1986 onwards.

Annamalai University’s(Chidambaram) Department of Business administration was established in 1978 to offer full-time MBA programme.

The Department of Management Studies(DOMS), NIT, Trichy, was started in 1978 with a M.E. programme in Management. The MBA programme was started in the year 1982.

The Department of Management Studies(DOMS), Madurai Kamaraj University, was started in 1980 to offer full-time residential MBA programme.

The Department of Management Studies, Anna University, was started in 1981 to offer full-time MBA programme. The Department, apart from MBA, offers B.E(Industrial Engg.), M.E.(Industrial Engg.), and PGDQM.
India's first ever Management Institute that housed inside an industrial giant was born in August 1984. Bharathidasan Institute of Management (BIM) - School of Excellence of Bharathidasan University, Trichy. BIM enjoys a unique symbiotic relationship with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) in terms of academic inputs and continuous industry exposure.

Bharathiar School of Management and Entrepreneurship Development (BSMED) was established in 1984. BSMED is located in the industrial town of Coimbatore, within the confines of Bharathiar University. The school offers MBA (FT) programme since 1984.

Amrita School of Business (ASB), earlier known as Amrita Institute of Management, started in 1996 by the Mata Amritanandamayi Math is a constituent of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (A Deemed University). The MBA Degree Programme (earlier termed as Post-Graduate Diploma in Management or PGDM) is a fully residential two-year programme at the Coimbatore campus of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham.

The Department of Management Studies of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, was started in 2001 and offers full-time MBA programme.

1.5. Management Education in Kerala: The story of School of Management Studies (SMS)

School of Management Studies (SMS), under the University of Kerala, Ernakulam Centre, was started in 1964 as one of the management institutes on the recommendations of the Ramaswamy Mudaliar committee of All India Board of Management Studies. The founder Director of the school was Padma Bhushan Emeritus Prof. (Dr.) M.V.Pylee. Initially, P.G.Diploma in Business Management (PGDBM) and P.G.Diploma in Industrial Management (PGDIM) were started for practising managers only. In 1971, the Ernakulam centre of University of Kerala was converted into University of Cochin comprising of SMS, Dept. of Hindi, Dept. of Law, Dept. of Physics, and Dept. of Marine Sciences. MBA (Full-Time) was started in 1973, and the first batch came out in 1975 under the University of Cochin. The three-year part-time P.G.Diploma programmes were subsequently converted into three-year part-time MBA programme. University of Cochin was renamed as ‘Cochin University of Science and Technology’ (CUSAT) in 1986. The
intake of first batch of MBA(FT) was 30. The first entrepreneurial training programme in India was started by SMS. The first young executive programme in India for the management trainees of FACT was also introduced by SMS. SMS was in the forefront among the University Management Departments (UMDs) during the 70s. During its long history, SMS had introduced innovative academic programmes. Master in Bank Management (MBM) and Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) were the first of its kind in India. SMS was one of the early management institutes like Bajaj, FMS, and UMDs of Madras and Punjab universities. The uniqueness of SMS students were:

- Width and depth in knowledge
- Freedom with sense of responsibility
- Feedback/Counseling through psychological test
- Action-oriented learning of management through organisation and management of event managements such as the annual Talentime.

SMS offers a 4-semester full-time and a 6-semester part-time MBA programme in addition to a 4-semester full-time Masters' programme in International Business (M.I.B.). All these programmes provide considerable options to specialise in different functional areas. Currently the School offers specialisation in the areas of Marketing, Finance, Systems, Operations and H.R.M. The School also offers M.Phil (Commerce) and Ph.D. programmes.

Over the years, the School has kept its ears open to the pulse of the market and has pioneered several programmes such as EDP (Entrepreneurship Development Programme), SIMAP (Small Industries Management Assistance Programme) etc. to name a few, apart from serving as a centre for management development, research and consultancy.

1.5.1. Other University Management Departments (UMDs) in Kerala:
Department of commerce in University of Calicut was started in 1972. The MBA Programme was started in 1982 by the department and then the name of the Department of Commerce changed as ‘Department of Commerce and Management Studies’.  

The Institute of Management in Kerala (IMK) was established under the University of Kerala in the year 1991. The Institute is located in the capital city of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram. The Institute provides Masters as well as Doctoral Programmes in Business Management.

School of Management and Business Studies of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, was started in 1999 and runs full-time MBA programme.

Department of Management Studies in Kannur University was established in 2000. It runs full-time MBA and research programmes.

1.5.2. Other Management Institutes in Kerala:
School of Communication and Management Studies (SCMS) is a business school established in Cochin in the year 1976. The Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) is offered by SCMS.

The College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram, is the pioneering management institution in Kerala University. The MBA programme was started in 1985 as a part time programme to cater to the needs of managers. The department started the full time MBA programme in 2000.

TKM Institute of Management (TIM), Kollam, has been conducting a fully residential, two year MBA programme, affiliated to University of Kerala since 1995.

Rajagiri School of Management (RSOM) was founded in 1995. It runs full-time MBA and MHRM courses.

Berchmans Institute of Management Studies (BIMS) was established in 1996 under St. Berchmans College, Changanacherry, to offer full-time MBA course.

Another known management institute in Kerala is D.C. School of Management and Technology, Vagamon, Idukki district. This institute is unique in terms of its location—a high range location where the faculty and students are exclusively engaged in training and development.
There are more than 15 colleges affiliated to different universities in Kerala offering MBA programmes.

1.6. Unique nature of MBA course

MBA study may or may not bring basic changes in attitude and skills. But MBAs are often perceived as polished and innovative in comparison with other post-graduates.

The way the programme is structured and the faculty and student interactions that make the difference as the most sought-after course across the globe. Generally, the B-school atmosphere generates a hunger to do things differently and better than the guy next door.

'A good B-school curriculum is tuned to make the students look at things differently. The curriculum is aimed at inculcating a holistic problem-solving and managing orientation, capable of judiciously balancing the 'hard' and 'soft' factors,' says Dr. Unnikrishnan Nair (2003), Associate Professor for organisational behaviour at IIM-Kozhikode.

A well blend of marketing, economics, finance, operations management, strategic management, statistics, organisational behaviour, business law, information technology and human resource management, with courses on foreign languages and cross-cultures form the curriculum to give a well-rounded worldview to the participants - a training which holds them in good stead for fairly the rest of their lives (Govil, 2003).

The major factor in the programme is the very stakeholders - the students and faculty. The faculty are the dons in their respective fields and the students are the cream of talents and a wide variety of profiles, some with work experience, the exchange of foreign students who bring with them the needed cultural diversity. All these things put together, it becomes the ingredients for a ready mix. This is the best possible recipe for augment people skills and to instill a leadership initiative. International students may enrich the cultural and intellectual environment of a university and foster understanding between different cultures. MBAs form a large part of this postgraduate market and according to Quacquarelli (1998), overseas participants can be as high as 90% in some leading UK Business Schools.
The invaluable learning in MBA programme comes from live field projects, informal interaction with classmates, professors and the visiting faculty, computer lab, and the storehouse of knowledge in the form of library. The very ambience in a B-school generates a must for tall achievement and creates a passion to move on and do rather bigger, better and more resourcefully than others. A management degree does make a difference to any career. The structured programme, the faculty and student interactions, and the very atmosphere that a good B-school generates, all combine to provide the right mix of talents required on the global stage, says Govil(2003). According to Cameron(1991), MBA programme has been traditionally aimed at increasing a manager’s ability to take good strategic decisions. It covers the analysis of problems and appreciation of their context; the use of appropriate conceptual tools and analytical and evaluative techniques; and often the development of consultancy skills. Eberhardt (1997) confirms that the consultancy sector has the most demand for MBAs because of their analytical skills so important for counseling services. Porter(1997) found that corporations hire MBAs as they have strong analytical ability, high motivation to work and good knowledge of relevant management functions. Baruch and Leeming(1996) indicated that MBA programmes enhanced the learning skills, research enquiry, and written presentation of individuals. Major international banks like Citibank also consider MBAs as sources of new talents, while the ABN-Amro bank believes in recruiting MBAs because they have sound knowledge of international management and financial principles (Quacquarelli,1998). Kretovics(1999) noted improvements in MBAs’ interpersonal relations, information gathering and analytical abilities.

What is really taught in a B-school? A method. A method of looking at the world, for taking a problem and searching one’s vast mental file drawer of examples to see which ways this problem is similar to any of them. A method of using examples that are similar yet by no means the same, to extrapolate what a solution might be to the problem at hand.

Management study and training programmes come with a variety of names - MBA (Master of Business Administration), MMS(Master of Management Studies), PGDBM (P.G.Diploma in Business Management), PGDBA(P.G.Diploma in Business Administration), and PGDM(P.G.Diploma in Management). During the course, there
are prospects of organisational internship providing a glimpse into the operations of an organisation. There is ample scope for role-play and other simulations to develop skills in relevant areas. This type of programme forms the basis for mutually supportive networks throughout one’s career. The B-schools generally have the facility of a placement cell that co-ordinates and facilitates campus recruitment by national and multinational organisations.

1.7. Management Education: Current Scenario

Management education in the country can roughly be divided into four groups. At the top are the reputed institutes and some university departments, which have maintained the high quality of education. The second rung institutes are those started by industrial houses, which offer some surety of a job after the course. The third rung are university departments which have not been able to impart quality education but can provide jobs in regional industrial groups. The fourth rungs are those institutes, which have neither the advantage of low fees of a university nor the backing of an industrial house. In recent times, a number of academics, retired people, politicians and others have started such institutes which remain essentially money making ventures.

The competition among the top institutes is intense as, everybody wants to do the MBA from one of them. There is no surety of getting in. Full-time courses from the most reputed institutions are usually expensive ranging from Rs.50,000 to Rs.2 lakhs per annum approximately. Of course an MBA from an American or European management school would multiply that figure many times so an MBA from India is comparatively cheaper. But working alongside studying for a full-time MBA in India is not possible, though some enterprising students have been able to work out a sponsorship for the programme from a prospective employer.

Usually, the two-year management programmes can be taken up after successful completion of a degree in any discipline. Graduates with a minimum 50 per cent (some institutes 45 per cent) marks are eligible to apply for admission to management programmes. They have to go through a selection process that includes
entrance/admission tests, followed by group discussions and interview of candidates declared successful in the written entrance test.

The aim of the entrance test is to evaluate, under stress, a candidate's general verbal, mathematical and analytical abilities critical for successful completion of MBA programme of studies. The management entrance test calls for a superior command over the English language, as well as quantitative prowess and a sharp, perceptive mind. An MBA admission test is not really a managerial aptitude test. It is rather a test to measure the potentiality of students for successful completion of the MBA programme. However, the group discussion and interview are linked with behaviour competence of future managers, especially relating to communication and leadership skills.

One has to assess the market value of an MBA student as the primary motive of management education is to a managerial position, and to move on to higher positions. If the industry is not aware of the worth of the MBA programme, then the very purpose of such programme is defeated. Specific requirements of specific industries have resulted in a new breed of MBAs. An MBA linking with agriculture, information technology, banking, petro-chemicals, etc. are example. Under-graduation in specific area is also insisted upon for admission to such MBA programmes. All these trends are in addition to the traditional functional specialisation in marketing, finance, HRM, systems and operations.

The spirit of MBA programme may be the integration of all relevant knowledge for practical application. Extreme specialisation in MBA is likely to dilute this spirit of general approach with focus on proper integration and co-ordination of knowledge from different disciplines. If specialisation is the order of the day, then management may be described as specialisation in general things.

The wide variety of subjects taught in MBA classroom – economics, psychology, mathematics, statistics, law, IT, sociology, etc - is a true reflection of this 'general approach'. It also may be noted that MBA students are taught as if they are going to be the general managers rather than a specialist in a staff department. It is true that the young MBAs are not likely to be general managers immediately and for immediate
placement they need to have specialised knowledge in functional or sectoral area. This is
the rationale for the structure of MBA scheme of studies.

Historically the expansion of MBA is Master in Business Administration, with more focus
on industrial enterprises. But today the concept 'Management' has become more popular
with connotation of effectiveness and efficiency for maintenance and growth of all social
organisations. 'Post Graduate Diploma in Management' is now becoming a popular
Diploma than the traditional 'Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration'.

While the demand for management education will continue to grow with the growth of
Indian economy, the quality demanded will undergo a shift. Functional B-schools,
sectoral B-schools, condensed MBA for one year or of shorter duration, modular MBA,
net based online MBA, executive MBA, etc. will provide new models of higher education
in management. It is likely that large corporations and growing industry may ask for
customised MBA and B-schools may respond to it. In India steel, power and oil industry
have already established excellent executive education centres; they will evolve into
promising B-schools(Sinha, 2004).

Even after more than five decades of the first management institute being set up in India,
most B-schools continue to use American textbooks for practically all the subjects. Philip
Kotler's 'Marketing Management' is the best example. Lack of good Indian text books
leads to students getting a very 'American view' of management. The lack of appreciation
of an Indian context remains one of the biggest banes of management education in India.
The American view of management is too bureaucratic, confrontational and rigid - with
too much emphasis on the individual. Philip(2004) says that the relevance of what is
taught and the methodology used is another critical issue to be looked at. There was a
time, particularly in the 60's and 70's that we depended almost exclusively on foreign
material and MNC cases. But that has changed substantially. Whether it is textbooks,
cases, research studies and other learned articles and publications, we have plenty of such
materials in the country. However, in the surge for self reliance, we should not neglect to
use foreign material in good measure, recognising the fact, that business management is
no more limited by the geographical boundaries of a country, but by the pulls, pressures and developments in the international markets.

Institutions offering MBA programmes must respond to market needs (Baruch and Leeming, 1996). Porter and Mckibbin (1988) noted that some B-Schools were not doing enough to develop 'soft skills' among MBA graduates. Prof. Sterling Livingston in his classified article 'The Myth of the well Educated Managers' demonstrated the lack of relationship between grades at the Harvard Business School (HBS) and subsequent success in management jobs. He argued that business schools need to access intuitive skills and common sense not just academic ability (Sinha, 2004). Herbert Simon, the first management professional to receive Nobel prize, suggested that if you wish to develop a star athlete, you must begin with someone who has the natural endowment, and then through practice, learning and experience, develop that into a mature skill. B-Schools should teach students who are endowed to use them purposefully (Sinha, 2004).

The AICTE, which also looks after management education may not be able to do full justice to the discipline. AICTE budget spent for management is only 4%. Ninety-nine per cent of its staff is from engineering discipline. AICTE has so far not been able to give significant attention to management education (Sinha, 2004). Management is a multi-faculty discipline; AICTE treats it as a single subject. One can't blame the AICTE, which sees technical education, not management, as its core (Sinha, 2004). So, it may be prudent to establish an All India Management Council (AIMC) with the sole purpose of enhancing the quality of management education. AIMC, which can take a comprehensive view on the development of the management education (Sinha, 2004).

Dharni P. Sinha (2004), in his book “Management Education in India”, summarises the following issues in management education in India:

- MBAs are ill-equipped to cope with or meet the challenges of a dynamic global environment
- B-schools faculty lack necessary business experience
- MBA curriculum is largely theoretical
Over emphasis on quantitative subjects, while development of people skills is neglected.

Linkage between B-schools and major stakeholders like industry is inadequate.

High cost of management education.

Unemployment among MBAs.

Lack of indigenous contents in curriculum.

Negligible attention to research in management.

Producing graduates more suitable to business and industry, not suited to social sectors such as public system, rural development, education system, etc.

1.8. Problems, Issues, and Prospects of Career Advancement of MBAs

One may want to gain a position of greater responsibility in his/her current field or he/she may want to switch from one area of business to another--from marketing or sales to strategic planning or finance. One could be looking for a change in his/her career path altogether. Using an MBA to switch career focus is a typical strategy. Many people seek a management position after acquiring expertise in a different field altogether--such as nursing, teaching, performing arts, or engineering--because they want to shift to a management position in their area. An MBA can help him/her make a major break or leap in his/her career path--with a concomitant leap in income. He/she may aspire to a higher position that requires an MBA as an entry-level eligibility. An MBA signals a prospective employer that he/she has got the knowledge and skills in a demanding job requires, as well as persistence, energy, and even time-management skills to handle it.

There are many instances of sponsoring of candidates by industrial/business organisations and this trend reflects that employers are also equally concerned with educational credential for the organisational positions. Many MBA students are aiming at becoming business entrepreneurs or self-employed in service sectors that implies that they value the training even more than the degree. While age and rank may be the most important factors determining MBA payback, one's industry and previous degree may also figure.
It seems that there is an increasing demand for MBAs in the human resources, public relations, communications and digital technology sectors. Also there seems to be a trend towards sectoral MBA degrees.

It can be noted that the business contacts formed during the pursuit of an MBA are an invaluable part of the process. What they pay is for the network. The more they pay, the more prestigious and valuable the network. Here it can be added that MBA students learn how to market themselves—a skill absolutely essential in the new economy. But in the end, the leadership skills of an individual MBA candidate make-or-break the onward journey.

There are many, who have been able to climb to the position of CEO by the time they are in their mid-thirties. However, the size of the organisation, the volume of business and the work profile and provision of learning on-the-job are important considerations for the assessment of advancement possibilities or career progression.

1.8.1. Training for the corporate world

Clearing the entrance test and joining the course are the immediate hurdles and it is commonly believed that once a person gets in he will most certainly become an MBA. Contrasted with courses for Chartered Accountant or Company Secretary, where some people get caught in the trap of repeating groups of papers, the MBA is a safe option.

The sense of achievement of an MBA student is very high. The course becomes one huge ego trip. Many students do not spend as much time on their training as they should, thinking that the MBA stamp will take them through jobs. This is only partially true. No company takes a person for his/her label alone, but for what he/she can contribute. The MBA is chosen for his/her professionalism and his/her training, his/her skills and his ability to manage. The two years of training, therefore, are to be spent in acquiring these skills.

How are these skills acquired? First, it requires gathering knowledge and gaining insight. Students have to change their study culture at their undergraduate classes where notes are given and answers to questions are mugged up for the examinations. The management course is different from other traditional courses. Application of knowledge and not mere
bookish knowledge is emphasised. That is why good B-schools are insisting on case discussions and group assignments.

The MBA student must learn everything that may be required in business situations. In addition to good academic comprehension and insight, he/she is to be groomed as an effective, efficient and impressive person with compassion for ideas and people. Unfortunately, many lower-rung institutes and university management departments do not have facilities for personal development of students or teachers trained for that purpose. The result is a stunted MBA which no good company would like to touch. The hallmark of a B-School is its focus on the dual objectives of academic performance and personal development of the students.

The ordinary B-schools do not insist on hard work simply because they are committed to the MBA course and not to the practice of professional management. To hide their shortcomings, they have collaborations with fancy sounding foreign universities and introduce exotic courses like yoga, spiritualism and ‘Eastern Management’. One institute advertises a golf course and swimming pool on its campus. The corporate sector is usually not impressed by such gimmicks.

Many students come to grief when they find that their expensive diploma/degree is not good enough to get a professional position or to move up in the ladder. In many institutes, the toppers get the good jobs but the average students have to accept lower offers. Youngsters who believe that an MBA label is a ticket to the good life face serious adjustment problems. The MBA, in fact, should be treated only as a pre-professional programme to prepare for the challenging corporate world.

1.8.2. Managing career expectations

Many MBA students have a myth that they will become senior managers the moment they complete their MBA. This could be the result of teaching MBAs from the General Managers’ points of view. Certain companies have found that expectations and ambitions of MBAs are difficult to meet and such organisations have taken policy decisions not to hire fresh MBAs. Though the MBA is a coveted degree, it becomes important to keep a level head and keep one’s expectations realistic. According to the hype, an MBA is a
senior manager, but fresh MBAs are usually taken at the level of management trainees. Initially, some low and tedious work may have to be done by the MBAs in order to be familiar with all aspects of the organisation. Roth (1990) says that graduates from top B-schools in the late 1990s looked for companies that offered them stock-options. If a student is not reconciled to this, frustrations are bound to arise. Job hopping is common, which ultimately hurts the career of the youngster.

After all, the company too has its expectations from the management graduate to whom it is paying a high salary. Somewhere and somehow this expectation-reality gap is to be reconciled for a better career advancement.

1.8.3. Qualities to be acquired

A good B-school puts pressure on the students to be on their toes and update their subjects on a continuous basis. MBA students report that in certain semesters they get very little sleep, so hard is the pressure to perform. Tests are announced at the last moment when the students are preparing to sleep, so that a person must update in all subjects at all times. Case studies enhance the applicability of concepts and theory to real life situations. The outcome of this is professional competence. Ultimately, the MBA must be seen as training for entry into the corporate sector.

Managerial position in a company requires a person to make presentations and to convince others. A person must, therefore, learn presentation skills and be a natural leader. Ability to take good decisions under pressure is also required. Many skills, such as quantitative analysis, are learnt from books but analysis of business situations is also required. This is done through case studies.

The summer organisational internship is another method of using the knowledge in real life situations. This training should be used as an opportunity to prove oneself and some meaningful work should be done. Professional competency is rewarded when the summer training results in an offer of a permanent job on completion of the degree. In this way, many students find jobs during their summer training, much before the actual completion of their course.
Getting selection in a reputed B-school is a big achievement. However, the real achievement is yet to come after two years of training in the B-school. The two years in the institute should be utilised to learn the skills in the best possible way. If the student is not busy enough, his/her MBA degree will be worthless even though it may have a fancy look.

1.8.4. Opportunities in Management
Marketing, Finance, Production, and HRM are the four major areas in management with each having several sub-branches. Marketing Management includes sales, purchase, international marketing (exports-imports), advertising, marketing strategy, consumer behaviour, market development and marketing research. Financial Management includes all the aspects relating to finances, investments, financing decisions, portfolio management, working capital management, international financial management, etc. Production Management takes care of Production methodology, operations research, quality management, materials management, stores and inventory management, etc. HRM deals with the most complicated aspect of management. It looks after the areas of Human resource procurement, development (HRD), HRM, industrial relations management, employee welfare and benefits, organisational development, management of change and general administration.

A degree of Master in Business Administration (MBA) is considered to be the gateway to careers in management. While choosing the area of specialisation in management, the candidates must gauge their aptitude for a particular aspect of management. Candidates with commerce background usually go in for financial management and the technical graduates with science or engineering degrees usually choose operations management/quality management/systems management/stores and inventory management, etc. Rest of the candidates chooses marketing management or HR Management, depending upon their aptitudes and flairs.

Rapid expansion of Industries in India has opened new vistas for excellent opportunities of careers in management. New Economic Policy of liberalisation and decontrols has increased the demand for managerial personnel in the corporate sector. Advent of multinational companies, which has just begun, may further increase the quest of the
industrial sector in all fields of management like Finance, Production, Marketing, Personnel and Administration.

The careers in management offer one of the best remuneration packages in the country, particularly in the private sector. In addition to the best of the salaries offered by this career, it offers outstanding developmental opportunities to enable the competent and dynamic managers to rise to the level of Chief executive. Several Indian professionals today are working as Managing Directors in many multi-nationals. Management professionals from India are also in good demand in international market. Private sector today offers rapid advancement to result-oriented professionals. Excellent perks are offered which may include free accommodation, free conveyance/attractive conveyance allowance, CPF, leave travel concession, medical allowance/reimbursement, etc.

Those who prefer Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) may join these undertakings at several levels. The managerial hierarchy and pay-structure in most of the PSUs is predetermined and also includes some perks, though not as attractive as offered by the private sector.

1.8.5. Career Prospects

The increasing number of B-schools and prospective students implies that Indian management education has reached a level of maturity. MBAs enter the job market with high intellectual ability and personal skills. They are widely perceived to have skills honed for managing a business, and to bring in valuable insights. Today, Indian companies have embraced buzzwords such as liberalisation, globalisation, and re-engineering with a vengeance. The corporates in their accelerated drive for the all-important competitive edge believe that management graduates with their macro vision and analytical minds can hold on by their own strengths.

MBA as a three-letter qualification has become almost mandatory for entry as well as advancement in a wide range of industries. Top companies - multinationals, foreign banks, foreign financial institutions, public sector undertakings, and apex financial institutions, blue chip IT companies, in effect the whole corporate sector -- offer golden opportunities to management graduates. The 'employability' of MBA is much better
than most other professions. It is estimated that in a year's time practically every MBA graduate gets placed in a suitable or near suitable job (Philip, 2004).

In top management institutes, campus recruitment is an annual event, when the best companies attempt to woo students with pre-placement talks and lucrative job offers to attract the best talents. Students, while deciding on the relative merits of job offers, need to look for certain pointers, such as:

- The operational strengths of the company and its future capability to maintain its position in the market place.
- Role and job profile offered.
- Training programmes and systems in the company which are essential for advancement.
- The overall business policy, ethics and value system the company has portrayed.
- Qualifications and background experience of the top management in the company.
- Organisation structure, reporting systems and systems of promotion in the company.

All these information cannot possibly be gathered when the companies come to the campus, but a concerted attempt by the students in advance can obtain such data.

Remuneration packages of MBAs are among the highest in the country with foreign financial institutions going up to such an extent that the larger Indian companies are being forced to hike their compensation packages to stay in the race. Entry level remuneration packages vary with the reputation of the management institution. Average MBA salaries tend to be in the region of Rs.2.5 – Rs.3 lakhs per annum though we may hear of people with double the amount or even half. Increasing business activity and the predominant shortage of well-trained managers for industry make the MBA tag a prestigious and a well-paying one. MBA graduates today
undoubtedly win the race for the best and the most remunerative jobs in general as well as in specialised branches. Management consulting and financial services have always been the traditional routes to top jobs and high salaries for MBA graduates. However, one thing is certain that there is a serious shortage of good managers, although the entry to management jobs remains very competitive. Indeed, employers today are looking for skills that would allow MBAs to handle international business, develop new businesses and manage flatter organisations (Sinha, 2004).

1.9. Concept of Career, Career Planning, Career Path, and Career Advancement, and Career Management

1.9.1. Concept of Career
An individual joins an organisation not just for a job but for a career, that is, where he/she will be at the fall end of his work-life through a series of progression in responsibilities and reward for such a responsibility. It is common to find out that after the initial excitement in a job, executives/managers tend to lose interest and begin to feel that there is no career in a particular organisation. This implies that career advancement has not taken place as expected by them after a certain period of time. This mismatch between a manager’s expectations and his/her actual career advancement experience may prove very shocking to both managers and the organisation. However, much of this problem can be overcome by proper career strategies by the individual and the organisation (Prasad, 2005). The above phenomenon of stagnation and meaningfulness in the current job is often termed as 'burnout'.

Greenhaus has defined career as 'the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person’s life' (Prasad, 2005). This definition includes both objective events, such as jobs, and subjective views of work, such as the person’s attitudes, values and expectations (Greenhaus et al., 2000). Therefore, both a person’s work-related activities and his/her reactions to those activities form part of the person’s career. This definition is consistent with the notion that career develop over time, and that all persons have careers, regardless of their profession, their level of advancement or the stability of their work pattern (Naidoo, 2004).
Geber (1992) has identified four distinct explanations for a career, namely a career as advancement, a profession, a lifelong sequence of jobs, and a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences.

- **A career as an advancement**
  A career can imply a vertical movement; in other words, upward mobility in an organization. It means that a person moves onwards in this work life, by means of a promotion, a transfer or a new job in a higher position in another company. It may also involve a lateral move with more responsibilities. A career in this sense refers to basic advancement, for example, a sales representative who advances through the ranks of the sales department to become a sales manager (Geber, 1992).

- **A career as a profession**
  This concept refers to those careers where a person has to follow a certain route during his/her career path; in other words, there is a clear pattern of advancement. The legal profession is an example of such a career. In such a profession a person starts his/her career as a law student, becomes a clerk in a law firm once he/she has completed his/her articles, an associate and then a partner, once a sufficient level of experience or expertise has been achieved (Geber, 1992).

- **A career as a lifelong sequence of jobs**
  This refers to a series of positions held during a person’s work life. There is no mention of a specific profession or any mobility, but it refers purely to any jobs held by the individual during his/her working life (Geber, 1992).

- **A career as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences**
  This refers to the way an individual personally rotates his/her job functions and gains experience. It is more of a personal experience (satisfaction, changing aspirations and attitude changes) [Geber, 1992].

From the above, it is clear that a career can be seen as a two-fold process consisting of individual factors (such as the individual’s likes, identity, self-image and interests) and
1.9.2. Career Planning

According to Rao and Rao (1990) career planning is the process by which one selects career goals and the path to these goals.

The career initiatives taken by both the individual and the organisation are referred to as 'career planning' (Naidoo, 2004).

Schein (1978) has defined career planning as

- a deliberate process of becoming aware of the self, opportunities, constraints, choices, and consequences;
- the identification of career-related goals;
- a programming of work, educational and related developmental experiences to provide the direction, timing and sequence of steps required to attain a specific career goal.

**Career Planning Process**

Figure 1.1 shows the Career planning process as given below:

![Career Planning Process Diagram]

Figure 1.1. Career planning process

(Source: Rao and Rao (1990))
1.9.3. Career Path
Rao and Rao (1990) have defined career path as ‘it is the sequential pattern of jobs that forms a career’. Career path is the logical possible sequence of positions that could be held by an individual based on how he performs in the organisation (Prasad, 2005). Career path consists of two elements: line and ladder. Line is the field of speciality in which an individual is placed like production, marketing, finance, HRM, etc. Within each line, there are various positions arranged in hierarchical order. Placing an individual on a career path indicates how the individual will progress to those positions. This placing is essentially determined by the alignment of individual needs, his strengths and weaknesses, and organisational opportunities (Prasad, 2005).

1.9.4. Career advancement
Career success is defined as extrinsic or objective and intrinsic or subjective accomplishments of individuals in their work lives (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, and Bretz, 1995). In extrinsic terms, careers are evaluated with the use of external reference points or norms; while in intrinsic terms, careers are evaluated by individuals themselves using personal subjective definitions of success or failure (Gattiker and Larwood, 1988).

- Unlike extrinsic career success, intrinsic career success is primarily associated with personality; with no consistent effects of general mental ability and with very weak experiential effects (Bozionelos, 2004)
- The link between intrinsic career success (satisfaction with one’s career) and extrinsic career success (pay, promotions, job level) has been demonstrated in numerous studies (Judge et al., 2004).

Career advancement is often defined in terms of promotion within managerial ranks, the level of management ultimately reached and the level of pay received (Naidoo, 2004). Career advancement is defined as the accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes resulting from one’s work experiences (Seibert and Kraimer, 2001). Seibert et al. (1999) defined career success as “positive psychological or work related outcomes or achievements that the individual accumulates as a result of work experiences”. Researchers often operationalise career advancement in one of two ways. The first
includes variables that measure objective or extrinsic career advancement (Gutteridge, 1973). These include indicators of career advancement that can be seen and therefore evaluated objectively by others, such as salary attainment and the number of promotions in one's career (Judge et al., 1995). The second way that career advancement is operationalised is by variables that measure subjective or intrinsic career advancement (Judge et al., 1995). Such variables capture individuals' subjective judgments about their career attainments, such as job and career satisfaction (Burke, 2001).

1.9.5. Career management

Career management can be described as an ‘ongoing process’ in the sense that an individual gathers relevant information about himself/herself and the world of work, develops realistic career goals, develops strategies, implements the strategies, and obtains feedback regarding the achievement of the set career goals (Naidoo, 2004).

Career management can be defined ‘as an ongoing process of preparing, implementing and monitoring career plans undertaken by the individual alone or in concert with the organisation’s career system’ (Schein, 1978).

According to Rao and Rao (1990), career management is the process of designing and implementing goals, plans and strategies to enable the organisation to satisfy employee needs while allowing individuals to achieve their career goals.

Career management may include activities that help individuals to develop and carry out career plans, but the focus is on taking actions that increase the chance that the organisation’s anticipated HRM needs will be met (Naidoo, 2004).

At its most extreme, career management is largely an activity carried out by the organisation. An example of such an activity is succession planning, which is typically carried out in secret by senior management to determine which employees can and should be prepared to replace people in positions of greater responsibility (Naidoo, 2004).

Career management and career planning activities can be complementary and can reinforce each other. For example, it is difficult to monitor the career plans of an individual who has not made specific plans to be monitored. A balance between the two
can make for effective career development. The organisation can support actions at any point on the spectrum, assisting the employee with career planning, as well as conducting career management activities, and thus play a role in effective career intervention (Desimone, Werner and Harris, 2002).

According to Hall (1986), the various activities fit into the career planning and career management spectrum include:

1. the amount of influence exerted by an individual;
2. the amount of information provided to the individual;
3. the amount of influence of the organisation; and
4. the amount of information provided to the organisation.

Career motivation (London, 1983) is a multi-dimensional concept consisting of individual and situational characteristics, reflected in the individual's career decisions and behaviour. It encompasses a person's motivation to do his/her present job and to meet expectations related to various managerial roles. It consists of three dimensions:

- Career identity factors reflecting career decisions and behaviour;
- Career in-sight (the extent to which the individual has realistic career perceptions); and
- Career resilience (the ability to overcome career setback).

1.10. Career advancement barriers

Swanson and Woitke (1997) defined career barriers as "events or conditions, either within the person or in his or her environment, that make career progress difficult". Elevated qualifications and economic fluctuations combined with internal (psychological) and external (environmental) interferences can make career advancement problematic (Smith, 2004). Career advancement barriers explain the continuing ability-attainment gap in the occupational choices of people (McWhirter, 1997).

The following are the potential career advancement barriers:
• **Dual career families**

In dual career family, one of the members might face the problem of career advancement due to transfer of the spouse, over-work load, etc. (Rao and Rao, 1990). Conflict with work and family responsibilities and desire to spend more time with family were the most common barriers to career advancement of women (Campbell, 1999). Indian women continue to bear the burden of household responsibilities regardless of their employment status (Bharat, 1992; Ramu, 1989). According to Desai (1996), Indian women tend to impose restrictions on their career aspirations or personal achievements for family reasons.

• **Low ceiling career**

Some careers do not have scope for much advancement inspite of a good career plan and development (Rao and Rao, 1990).

• **Lack of career guidance**

Lack of career guidance and minimal provision of training and education programmes for junior managers may lead to gaps in some career development initiatives.

• **Flat organisational structure**

Organisations creating a flat organisational structure may lead to lack of opportunity for promotion.

• **Ethnic reasons**

Ethnic minorities perceived greater barriers to finding a job, job performance, and career balance than non-minorities (Smith, 2004).

**1.11. Career advancement strategies**

Individual and organisation have to respond strategically to the perceived barriers to career advancement. The following are the potential strategies to overcome the career advancement barriers:
• Educate the people to discover their own talents, needs and motives (Rao and Rao, 1990). Taking more personal responsibility for developing career seems to be a common theme among professionals (Craig, 1998).

• Facilitating the people for career switching. Facilitators to career advancement included accepting an increase in job responsibilities or taking on new assignments, moving to a different department or service, and changing jobs which required learning new skills (Campbell, 1999). Moving employees laterally and helping employees find new challenges in their current jobs are becoming more accepted career development alternatives (Craig, 1998). Volunteering one’s skills for any assignments that might lead to the position he/she wishes (Craig, 1998).

• Imparting necessary educational facilities (Rao and Rao, 1990).

• Initiating career counseling (Rao and Rao, 1990).

• Introducing more flexible reward and promotional systems (Rao and Rao, 1990).

• Developing network. The value of a network of professional colleagues cannot be overlooked. Recruiters and placement professionals agree that developing a professional contact network should be part of any strategic career plan. It is important to have visibility with people outside the current institutions (Craig, 1998).

• Providing supportive measures. Positive correlations were found between the number of career facilitators and social support (Campbell, 1999).

1.12. Theories on Career Advancement

1.12.1. How does career advancement occur?

It is important to understand how career advancement occurs for managers. There is a need to advance to higher levels for those who are most effective. Lack of performance by managers leads to failure; and a good performance leads to profitability (Erwee, 1988). Ways to advance to high positions in today’s organisations differ from those two decades ago (Kotter, 1996). Earlier, the career advancement was based on job ladders, seniority,
and tenure. But, presently, positions are fewer, structure is flat, and more decentralisation. This changed the way the career advancement occurs (Naidoo, 2004). Selection and promotion practices are now more structured and less subjective than a decade ago (Kotter, 1998). Equal employment opportunity, diverse applicants for managerial positions, more applicants from ethnic groups and races (Kotter, 1998) are the features of the present scenario in career advancement.

1.12.2. Career mobility
Career mobility refers to the 'movement by an individual to advance his/her own career' (Naidoo, 2004). The two prominent theoretical perspectives that examine career mobility are; (1) the contest-mobility perspective, and (2) the sponsored-mobility perspective (Turner, 1960). Research on upward mobility is relevant to career advancement because those who are able to move up the societal or organisational hierarchy are typically regarded as successful and are more likely to view themselves as successful. According to Turner (1960), there are two systems of upward mobility in society: contest-mobility and sponsored-mobility. A contest-mobility system reflects the central belief that all people can compete for upward mobility; in contrast, a sponsored-mobility system permits only those who are chosen by the powerful to obtain upward mobility. Although these perspectives are fundamentally different, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Rosenbaum, 1984; Wayne et al., 1999), i.e. a society or an institution may have an upward mobility system that reflects one perspective more than the other but not necessarily to the point of exclusion.

1.12.3. Contest-mobility perspective
The contest-mobility perspective says that what makes the greatest difference in getting ahead in an organisation is performance on the job and adding value to the organisation. One can only go up on the basis of one's own abilities and performance. People compete with each other in an open and fair contest for advancement, and success comes to those who demonstrate the greatest accomplishments. One's human capital should be highly relevant for predicting career advancement because human capital is highly rewarded in the labor market (Becker, 1964). Human capital predictors include the number of hours worked, work centrality, job tenure, organisation tenure, work experience, willingness
to transfer, international work experience, education level, career planning, political knowledge and skills, and social capital. Cable and Murray (1999) found that publication records in graduate school was a significant predictor of job offers received and salary. It shows that the contest-mobility perspective can be an effective measure to predict the career advancement. Further, this perspective says that those in power (established elites) cannot necessarily determine who will finally achieve upward mobility. Metaphorically, this perspective suggests that those who start off slowly are still able to succeed in the end by devoting the required time and energy.

1.12.4. Sponsored-mobility perspective
The sponsored-mobility perspective says that people in power (established elites) pay special attention to those employees who are deemed to have high potential and then provide sponsoring activities for helping them to win the race. Organisational sponsorship predictors include career sponsorship, supervisor support, training and skill development opportunities, and organisational resources. This suggests that those who have early successes are more likely to receive sponsorship, and those who do not are likely to be excluded from such sponsored activities. Once they are identified as potential elites, then the chosen persons are given favorable treatment to make them even better and are even differentiated from the potentially non-elite group. Metaphorically, this perspective suggests that, these potential elites start the race earlier, gain momentum more quickly, and are more likely to be declared as winners. Kanter (1977) says that socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender and race, are often used as the criteria to allocate sponsorship. Tharenou (1997) observed that employers assign individual women to lower level positions. Non-Whites may be viewed as less competent and not worthy of organisational sponsorship compared to Whites (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Married individuals may be allocated sponsorship as they are more stable and responsible than singles (Pfeffer and Ross, 1982). Finally, it leads to a conclusion that sponsorship activities may be disproportionately allocated to those who are more skilled and experienced, and both experience and organisational savvy accumulates with age (Ng et al., 2005).
By using these two perspectives, Ng et al. (2005) identified four sets of variables that have been frequently used as predictors of career success. These predictors are human capital, organisational sponsorship, socio-demographic status, and stable individual differences. They say that traditionally, human capital predictors (such as amount of work experience or knowledge) have been used to examine career success using the contest-mobility lens. Human capital refers to individuals' educational, personal, and professional experiences (Becker, 1964) that can enhance their career advancement and is often examined as a predictor of career success (Judge et al., 1995; Wayne et al., 1999). The broader variables of human capital include the number of hours worked, work centrality (i.e., job involvement), job tenure, organisation tenure, work experience (i.e., number of years worked), willingness to accept transfer, international work experience, educational level, career planning, political knowledge and skills, and social capital (i.e., quantity and/or quality of accumulated contacts) [Ng et al., 2005].

By the same token, organisational sponsorship and socio-demographic status have been typically used to examine career success using the sponsored-mobility perspective. Turner's (1960) model did not include stable individual differences and they do not appear to be more closely allied to one perspective than to the other. Nonetheless, they included stable individual difference variables because they have often been examined in previous research on career (Ng et al., 2005). Stable individual difference variables include extroversion, pro-activity, internal locus of control, and cognitive ability.

It is true that the sponsored system essentially creates a shorthand method for managers to use to identify their rising stars quickly. This approach is appropriate for any firm in the start-up period and in an environment of labour shortages. However, the sponsored system has at least two drawbacks. First is the pitfall of selection errors occurring when capable employees are mistakenly eliminated at an early stage; these employees will not have much chance subsequently to demonstrate their abilities. At the same time, employees who are aware in advance that they are being considered for the highest positions do not need to consider the long-term consequences of their behaviour. They will not have to make the kind of effort they would have to put forth in a situation of competitively based promotion, in which there are no guarantees (Rosenbaum, 1984).
Second, if future managers have already been pointed out at an early stage of their career tracks, the motivation of those not so identified, a significantly larger number, is likely to decrease. No matter how much effort non-selected employees put in, they are not promised further opportunities for advancement. This can lead to less efficient uses of human resources on the whole (Wailerdsak and Suehiro, 2004). Therefore, the sponsored system seems inappropriate for a long-established, reputable company with a pool of well-trained employees (Wailerdsak and Suehiro, 2004).

1.12.5. Objective Vs. Subjective career advancement

Researchers have viewed career success primarily from the perspective of the individual employee. More precisely, career success has been assessed either using the individual’s past, tangible accomplishments or the individual’s own perceptions of satisfaction with his or her progress (Callanan, 2003). Empirical research on career success has tended to use the objective measures, although there are studies that utilise both objective and subjective assessments (Greenhaus, 2003; Poole and Langan-Fox, 1993). Objective indicators of career success include such factors as total compensation, number of promotions, and other tangible accomplishments. Objective career advancement says that people who earn higher salaries and are promoted faster are typically regarded as more successful in their careers, whereas the subjective career advancement focuses on intangible factors like career satisfaction, recognition, etc. Objective and subjective career advancements are positively correlated (Judge et al., 1995). One’s objective career advancement (tangible career achievements) may lead to greater satisfaction (intangible career achievements) with one’s career later. Obtaining a higher salary level and more promotions relative to others is likely to enhance one’s perceptions of advancement. Because wealth and social standing are valued in a society, tangible career achievements may lead to feelings of greater career satisfaction. Here, it must be noted that the objective career advancement alone is not an indicator of subjective career advancement.

Certain socio-demographic groups face wage and promotion discrimination (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Personality is closely related to perceptual variables such as subjective career advancement (Bell and Staw, 1989).
Organisational sponsorship is likely to generate higher levels of career satisfaction and a stronger sense of career advancement (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Ng et al. (2005) expects that human capital factor to be stronger predictors of objective than subjective career advancement.

The highest objective career success was reported by employees with a high level of education, who worked in larger organizations with well-structured progression ladders and invested considerable effort in their work role. In contrast, the highest subjective career success was reported by employees who were high on work centrality, who worked in organisations with well-structured progression ladders and employment security, and who networked frequently yet reported a lack of ambition (Nabi, 1999).

1.13. Approaches to career choice

- Beginning their work in the late 1930s to 1950s, the pioneers of career theory—known as the Chicago School—developed the notion that careers are comprised of both objective and subjective elements (Dobrow, 2004).

- A career is commonly defined as a person's movement through a sequence of jobs over his or her life (London and Stumpf, 1982). The organisational context for career progress includes key aspects that facilitate managers' careers: performance evaluation, promotion systems, training systems, salary and incentive systems and career development programmes. Gilley and Eggland (1989) define career development as an organised, planned effort comprising structured activities that will result in a mutual planning effort between employees and their organisation. Similarly, Graen and his associates (1997) define career progress as the speed of the flow of individuals along a monotonically more valuable sequence of jobs. An important feature of career progress is that a corporation and its employees are partners, which means that employees are responsible for planning their own careers and that corporations should support them in their endeavour (Firkola, 1996).

Career theory has a rich history which dates back nearly 100 years. Major theories and approaches evolve at different stages are:
1. The Social theory
2. The Individual trait theory
3. The Social learning theory
4. The Career stages theory
5. The Individualistic Approach
6. The structured Approach
7. The Human Capital theory
8. The Systems theory

Brief explanation on each of the above theories and approaches are summarised below.

1.13.1. Social theory
This theory has its origin in 1890s. Focus was on the relationship of social status to career attainment. It demonstrates that there is a relationship among parental occupation, education, and wealth and the occupational status and income attained by the children. But it is still unclear exactly why this relationship exists. I.e. it is more a descriptive theory than an empirically supported one with explanations on the relationship.

1.13.2. Individual trait-factor theory
This theory was in vogue in 1920s. It grew out of a long search for explanations of individual differences despite common externalities. The matching of individual characteristics with vocational choices was an important concern even in traditional societies. Although trait theory rests on the assumption that people do change and develop at least during childhood, it still assumes that adults and their occupational environments are relatively static. Traditional trait-factor theories of career choice and development overlook too many pertinent influences on career decision-making, such as change and chance events.
1.13.3. Social learning theory

This theory assumes that everything is learned by experience. People acquire their preferences through a variety of learning experiences, beliefs about themselves and the nature of their world emerge through direct and indirect education experiences. They take action on the basis of their beliefs using learned skills. Altman (1997) says that social learning theory views early experiences as a basis for developing career self-efficacy and interests as well as career goals and choices throughout life.

1.13.4. Career stages theory

Career stages theory says that there are five stages in a person's entire career life. They are: Exploration, Establishment, Mid-career, Late career, and Decline.

In exploration stage (5-20 years), the choice of the career is made which is determined by the factors like relatives, teachers, friends, films, interests, and financial resources of the parents and individuals.

Establishment stage (26-40 years) includes getting the first job, being accepted by peers, learning the job, and gaining the first tangible evidence of success or failure in the real world. At this stage, individuals are not given risk assignments that carry great power or high status.

Mid-career stage (41-55 years) gives most people severe career dilemmas. At this stage individuals continue their prior improvements or performance level begins to deteriorate. To those who make successful transition get greater responsibilities and rewards. For others, it may be a time of reassessment, job changes, adjustment of priorities or the pursuit of alternate life styles such as making a major geographical move or go back to college. The phenomenon of 'burnout' is often observed at this stage.

Late career stage (55-70 years) is a pleasant time for those who continue to go through the mid-career stage. In successful late career, one is allowed the luxury of relaxing a bit and enjoys playing the part of the elder statesman. It is a time when one can rest on the laurels and bask in the respect given by younger employees. Here, learning is no longer expected, nor one is expected to out perform his/her past performance.
For those who have stagnated or deteriorated during the previous stage, the late career brings the reality that they will not have an everlasting impact or change the world as they had once thought. It is a time when individuals recognise that they have decreased work mobility. One begins to look forward to retirement and the opportunities of doing something different.

The final and decline stage (after 70) is the time for retirement. Individuals are forced to step out of the lime-light and give up a major component of their identity. For the modest performers or those who have seen their performance deteriorate over the years, it may be a pleasant time. The frustrations that have been associated with work will be left behind. The work related recognition is no longer there. Responsibilities will be fewer and life will be less structured. As a result, it is a difficult stage for any one to feel a sense of comfort and achievement.

1.13.5. The individualistic approach

The individualistic approach contends that career aspirants are the main agents for determining their careers which involves knowing their strengths and interests, but not much about the organisation's career system. As noted by Rosenbaum (1989), the individualistic approach finds its most eloquent expression in the human capital theory. As the labour market represents an open opportunity to all employees, an employee's career success is contingent upon effort, ability, education, and training (Becker, 1964).

1.13.6. The structured approach

The structured perspective on the other hand, contends that instead of individuals controlling their own human capital, organisational practices, as defined by the career system, constraints their human capital. It takes into account the internal labour market (i.e., labour within the organisation) and the mechanisms by which assignment and promotion decisions are made.

1.13.7. The human capital theory

The human capital theory says that individuals invest in human capital by way of training and education to improve their competencies and future careers. Thus, the amount of human capital possessed by an individual would influence his or her level of performance.
and consequently, receipt of organisational rewards like status and income (Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1974). Human capital includes education, training, and work experience.

1.13.8. Systems theory
The systems theory recognises the important historical and political influences that have led to the current emphasis on self-determination. It examines the common forces of influence and explore the various ways that an individual client may have retained original culture while simultaneously adopting practices from the dominant culture. As a relatively new formulation in the field of career development, the systems theory acknowledges the complex array of influences and the recursive nature of many of those influences.

The theory provides a framework for understanding why career trajectories are not exactly repeatable, how relatively minor changes in subtle variables can lead to major changes in career path and how realistic and constructive approaches to career decision-making may be reconciled within a unitary framework.

Organisational researchers have tested relatively comprehensive models of career advancement. Some specific findings are that human capital variables (education, years in the workforce, experience in multiple organisations, and career interruptions), demographic variables (gender, marital status, and spouse employment status), and organisational characteristics (organisation size, metropolitan location, and industry sector), have effects on salary, promotions, and/or career satisfaction (Judge and Bretz, 1994; Judge et al., 1995; Kirchmeyer, 1998; Seibert et al., 1999; Wayne et al., 1999).

Further, it is observed that there is only limited ranges of variables were examined as predictors of career advancement in the past researches. Thus, there is a need to identify a larger and more heterogeneous set of predictors. To develop a useful theoretical perspective on career advancement, the identification of additional predictors is warranted. Some personal and other key variables may facilitate the career success. A lot of research findings are available on personal and other variables' influence on career success of managers in general. [Review of research findings on various variables that
influence career advancement is given in the next chapter titled as 'Review of Literature'.

1.15. Focus of the present study

MBA as the top management qualification enjoys a considerable amount of popularity. However, doubts exist about the success of the course for managerial advancement. Only a limited number of research projects which aimed at studying the potential returns of an MBA programme in terms of career advancement.

As yet, little systematic research has been conducted into the fate of MBAs in the Indian labour market. Although a significant amount of research has focussed on how individual-level variables affect managerial and executive career success (Hamori, 2004), a more comprehensive research has not been done.

This area of research can go some way to answer the question about the experiences of MBA graduates in the labour market. For example we know that MBA managers are younger and are more highly educated than their counterparts. Many of the MBA managers too experience career barriers that may be linked to some personal, professional, organisational, and environmental variables.

But not many studies are available on the influence of personal and other key variables on career advancement of MBAs as such. As we know the MBAs are one of the major chunks of corporates managers, studying the influence of some of the key variables on career advancement of MBAs will be a useful contribution to enrich the existing theoretical perspective on career advancement. This research may partially facilitate to develop person-organisation fit, which may lend useful insight to predict people in their career advancement.