

# How Nano MBAs could democratise business education in India

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Business education in India is at an important inflection point. While traditional MBA and PGDM programmes continue to play a vital role in leadership development, the aspirations, constraints, and learning preferences of today's learners are far more diverse than before. As an academic leader, I strongly believe that the future of management education lies not in replacing existing models, but in expanding them thoughtfully. One such powerful expansion is the concept of the Nano MBA.

A Nano MBA is a compact, focused business education programme that delivers essential management knowledge in a short duration. Unlike a conventional MBA that offers comprehensive coverage across disciplines, Nano MBAs are modular, outcome-driven, and skill-specific. They are designed to address immediate learning needs, whether it is strategic thinking, business analytics, digital marketing, leadership essentials, or financial decision-making.

India's diversity is its strength, but it also presents challenges in ensuring equitable access to quality education. Nano MBAs have the potential to democratise business education in multiple ways.

The cost of a full-time MBA often becomes a barrier for talented individuals from economically diverse backgrounds. Nano MBAs, due to their short duration and focused scope, substantially reduce this financial burden while retaining academic rigour. This makes quality business education accessible to first-generation learners, early-career professionals, and aspiring entrepreneurs

who may otherwise remain excluded from formal management education.

Equally important is the issue of geographical access. High-quality business education in India is still concentrated in metropolitan cities. Nano MBAs, especially when delivered through online or blended formats, remove the need for physical relocation. Learners from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities can access structured management education while remaining connected to their local ecosystems. This wider reach not only benefits individuals but also contributes to regional capacity building and more balanced economic development.

Another critical dimension is relevance. The business environment today is shaped by rapid technological change, data-driven decision-making, and constant disruption. Traditional programmes, by their very nature, take time to revise curricula. Nano MBAs allow institutions to design and deploy updated modules quickly, ensuring that learners acquire skills aligned with current and emerging industry needs. This agility makes business education more responsive and outcomes-oriented.

Nano MBAs also encourage a culture of lifelong learning. Careers are no longer linear, and professionals must continuously reskill and upskill to remain relevant. By enabling learners to acquire knowledge in small, meaningful modules over time, Nano MBAs support continuous professional development. Learners can stack multiple modules based on their career stage and aspirations, creating a personalised learning journey rather than a one-time educational event.

From the perspective of executive education, Nano MBAs offer exceptional



value. Working professionals and senior executives often do not require broad academic coverage; instead, they seek targeted learning that can be applied immediately. Nano MBAs cater to this need by focusing on specific managerial challenges such as leadership transitions, strategic execution, financial understanding for non-finance roles, or digital transformation. Their time-efficient format respects the constraints of busy professionals while delivering high-impact learning experiences.

For working professionals who aspire to pursue an MBA but are constrained by time, finances, or

personal responsibilities, Nano MBAs act as a meaningful bridge. They provide exposure to structured management education, build academic confidence, and create clarity about future learning paths. More importantly, the application-oriented nature of Nano MBAs ensures immediate workplace impact, often leading to visible improvements in performance and career progression. In the long run, these programmes can also serve as pathways to executive MBA or advanced management programmes, making higher education more flexible and inclusive. Nano MBAs

represent a thoughtful evolution in management education—one that places the learner at the centre while responding to the needs of a dynamic economy. As educators, our responsibility is not only to impart knowledge but to enable transformation. By integrating Nano MBAs into the broader educational ecosystem, we can truly democratise business education in India and prepare a wider, more diverse pool of leaders for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

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