The year 2020 will be considered a landmark year in the evolution of management education in India, albeit forced by a force majeure in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic. The government-mandated lockdown had briefly disrupted the conduct of courses in educational institutes, with the majority, if not all, switching to online modes of content delivery within a short span of time. An optimistic return to content delivery in the offline classroom mode can become feasible in the upcoming months as news of the success of the vaccine trials indicates. Meanwhile, the status quo of virtual classes continues and this interim period of transition to the virtual mode has been particularly challenging for educational institutions, accustomed to a course architecture that incorporates pedagogies like case study methodology, hands-on workshops, and peer learning through classroom discussions as part of their content delivery. The transition from the physical classroom mode to the virtual mode needed setup of the necessary physical infrastructure, integration of Learning Management Systems (LMS), and faculty training through workshops to familiarise themselves with teaching in the virtual mode. The initial shocks of this disruptive transition needed on-the-go learning by all the stakeholders, now adapted to the virtual mode of course delivery.

Institute of Management Technology (IMT) Ghaziabad is on the course to build on these learnings to institute paradigm changes to the programme architecture of the various courses.

As one of the pioneers of Management Education in India, the IMT group of institutions has been at the forefront of adopting pedagogical innovations in education. IMT Ghaziabad, the crown jewel of this group, has helped build up this legacy through cutting edge programmes and forward-looking pedagogical innovations. The 30000+ alumni network with over 300+ C-Suite Executives stands testimony to this long track record in Academic Leadership. Sensing the pulse of the industry has been one of the strong points helping us excel as a leader in the management education sector.

The new work norms prevalent in a virtual work mode calls for new skillsets in a manager’s toolkit. These skillsets are aligned to the Work-From-Home (WFH) mode employed by firms across domains. These include the ability to remote network, deeper domain knowledge of functional areas, ability to work in cross-cultural environments and virtual offices, critical thinking skills, improved communication, emotional intelligence, and improved tech-savviness, to name a few. These new work norms also highlight the increased importance of inculcating soft skills that are required to be successful as a Virtual Manager. In light of the evolving work environment, management institutions across the world have undertaken significant revisions to the programme architecture to integrate the technical aspects and soft skills into the coursework, equipping the students for a long-term career, far and beyond preparing them for a ‘placement job market’.

The pedagogical restructuring at IMT Ghaziabad has a technology dominant approach to content delivery at its core. This includes a holistic learning approach in the virtual mode through hybrid classrooms, online proctored exams, virtual pre-class group preparations, and integration of offline and online learning. The success of the approach so far emulates similar positive results from top management schools worldwide and the education sector overall, and these initiatives are likely to continue to be a part of the teaching pedagogy even after the disruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic abate. Offering International Certification Programmes in specific domain areas across different IMT campuses in India (Ghaziabad, Nagpur, and Hyderabad), intended to augment the industry readiness of the graduating students, is another step in this direction.

However, despite the evident success of the technology-led innovations, the dynamic work culture calls for more radical changes to pedagogy and content. Global exposure has been counted as one of the factors which can help a management professional towards a successful international career and Study Abroad or International Exchange Programmes has been one of the avenues for management students to gain exposure to multi-cultural international settings. The International Accreditation Agencies like EQUIS and AACSB have long acknowledged the relative importance of this component calling for the globalisation of the programme offerings. The Global Immersion Module to be offered to IMT students in India is an initiative in this regard. This will be further supplemented by course teaching by international faculty from partner institutions across the globe.

A revamp of the Dual Country Programme (DCP), aimed at candidates with global aspirations, offered by IMT Ghaziabad in collaboration with IMT Dubai, is one of the other initiatives that has been undertaken in the upcoming academic year. The students of the programme undertake a year of coursework each at IMT Ghaziabad and IMT Dubai. The restructured DCP programme offers its participants super specialisations and a completely new programme architecture, in addition to providing more avenues for international exposure through global connect weeks and internships in the GCC region. Overall, the focus on global exposure will be a major factor that differentiates the programmes offered by IMT Ghaziabad from the plethora of management institutions around.