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A study of marketing strategies followed by management institute in Bihar

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Abstract- There are 92 MBA Institutes in Bihar, of which 26 are government and 66 are private. In spite of such a high number of MBA institutes, there is no empirical peer-reviewed study which systematically explores the marketing practices used by these institutes. The aim of this paper is to address this research gap through an evidence-based synthesis of existing secondary literature. Case analysis of vendors' case study shows two different approaches to marketing: mass digital acquisition carried out by private institutes like CIMAGE Patna, with 1,100+ admissions through Meta and Google campaigns and 32,000 registrations for a career event; and regional outdoor campaign of institutes like Mithila Institute of Management, targeting Darbhanga, Madhubani, and Patna during admissions period . Institutional prospectus of CIMP and LNMI stresses more on accreditation, legacy, and rankings, as compared to placement results. Placement statistics compiled by Collegedunia shows a high level of variation: median package is reported as 12.12 LPA at IIM Bodh Gaya and 6.50 LPA at CIMP, while several other regional institutes do not report any placements.

Key Word: Management Education, Bihar, Marketing Strategy, Student Recruitment, Digital Marketing, Institutional Branding

I. INTRODUCTION

The educational management industry in Bihar poses an interesting dilemma for the field of study. The state has 92 MBA-listed institutions, which comprise 26 public and 66 private institutions, out of which 37 are single institutions. However, there appears to be a wide variation in terms of marketing efforts and spending amongst the institutions, and some appear to have problems filling their quotas even after spending on promotions.

The implications are serious. Management education is an experience good. Prospective students cannot make their judgments about the quality until they join, and they need to look at various signals such as placements, reputation, infrastructure, and faculty credentials to minimize their uncertainties. The national level research on Indian management aspirants has established a hierarchy of decision criteria for admission, with placements leading the list, then friends' referrals, inclusiveness, hostel, ecosystem, peer group, and faculty credentials.

Institutional structure in Bihar is diversified. The most premium institutions include IIM Bodh Gaya and CIMP Patna. CIMP, which was founded in 2008 under Government of Bihar patronage, is an AICTE-accredited institution and is NBA-accredited. It clearly identifies itself with research and placement in national and international companies. LNMI, which was founded in 1973, highlights its 50-year experience, a new curriculum including AI and data analysis, and "Smart Campus" concept. Regional institutions include Mithila Institute of Management that uses outdoor advertisements in different cities, while other institutions can be found only in directories with almost no advertising evidence.

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The digital marketing agencies in Patna have taken advantage of this environment. CIMAGE's case study from its agency Mediagarh shows a record of 1,100+ admissions through campaigns of Meta and Google, a 68% increase in ROAS, and 32,000 registrations for their Career Mahakumbh event, where 18,000 participated, and 450 became admissions straightaway. This is an unaudited vendor reported number, but it shows at least some of the institutes of Bihar have been making considerable investments in digital acquisitions.

Apart from this, an agency blog that is focused on Muzaffarpur claims that conventional ways like pamphlet distribution and flex hoardings are "bleeding budgets with zero trackable return on investment" and suggests hyper-local SEO, video content, and WhatsApp CRM automation for educational institutes in North Bihar.

What is absent from this evidence base is an independent and systematic evaluation. The vendor case studies reveal the actions taken by agencies on behalf of their paying customers. The institutional prospectuses reveal how the institutions want to be perceived. The directory listings reveal the existence of these institutions, not their marketing practices. This paper therefore does not attempt to evaluate "marketing strategies" in an all-inclusive manner. The aim of the analysis will be to evaluate the existing evidence to uncover patterns, alignment, and gaps.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Studies into the factors affecting selection of management institutes in India have yielded fairly consistent results about the criteria that the applicants consider important. Of the fourteen criteria in the Fuzzy AHP study conducted by Singh & Sharma, the one that ranks highest is that of placement followed by referrals from friends. The conclusion drawn has immediate marketing implications since communication stressing on placement and peer recommendations would work more effectively than general marketing. Another surprising result is that of inclusion, hostel facilities, ecosystem and peer group being of greater importance than that of faculty and cost. This seems to suggest that the institutes tend to invest too much on faculty based marketing communications.

Studies into the Indian institutions of higher education confirm the importance of placements, brand name and infrastructure as attractive features. Brand loyalty studies done at Indian B-schools show that brand experience and brand trust are the two things which make people advocate the brand and this means that the marketing strategy at such places has to be relationship building and experiential rather than transactional.

There is almost no academic literature specific to Bihar. The most thorough publicly available information comes from institutional presentation. The placement brochure of CIMP mentions the NIRF 2024 ranking band of 101–125 in management and recruiter organizations such as ITC, Asian Paints, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank. The prospectus of LNMI stresses its connection with the government, its fifty years of history, AI and ESG modules, and transparency in the digital space. Such sources are inherently promotional and cannot be considered unbiased evidence of quality or effectiveness.

Case studies published by vendors are the only sources of in-depth information on individual marketing campaigns of Bihar institutions. Case Study at CIMAGE, written by its agency, provides information about a multiple channel online strategy that includes the use of landing pages, SEO, Meta campaigns, Google search & display and events. Similarly, the Mithila Institute of Management campaign, as published by the agency, highlights a pure outdoor campaign involving the use of hoardings and unipoles in three cities. These sources can help identify the marketing activities conducted by various institutes, but they are vendor-driven and do not serve as a basis for comparison of their effectiveness.

Thus, the problem area addressed in this paper can be considered more analytical in nature rather than empirical, since it synthesizes fragmentary evidence in order to characterize the marketing activities and their compliance with choice determinants.

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This research project uses a sequential design for its methodology. The first stage is the use of a quantitative audit of the marketing practices observed within a sample of institutes. The second stage is a perception survey carried out among students on the factors that influence their source of information and choice preferences.

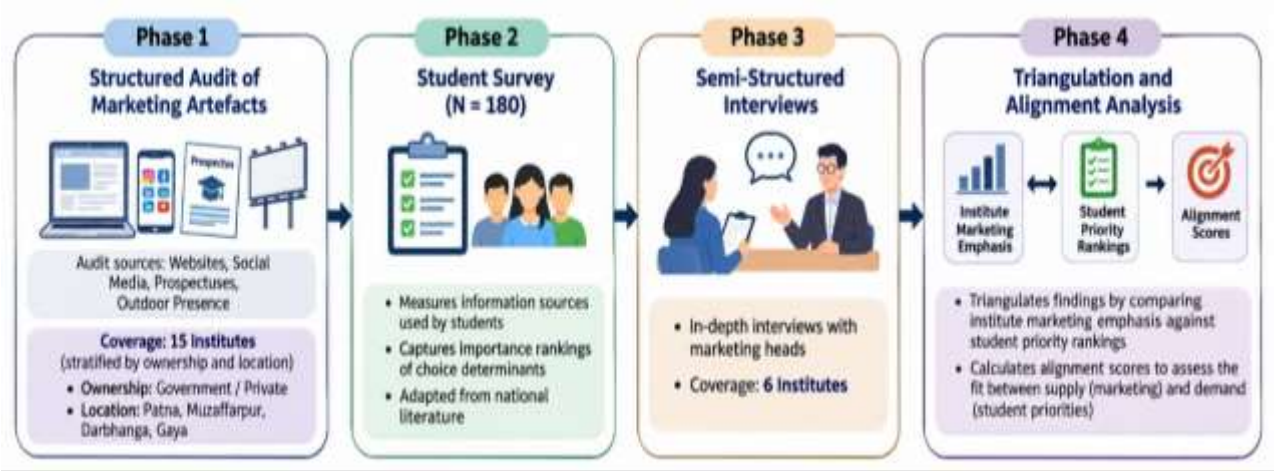

Figure 1: Research Design for Primary Data Collection

2. Sampling Frame

The population frame will comprise AICTE recognized management institutes in the state of Bihar and will include 92 institutes from the directory data. The recommended sample size is 15 institutes which would be stratified based on the ownership (government/autonomous vs. private) and geographical location (Patna, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Gaya). It would be a purposive sampling of non-probability type that would be used to compare the features and not make any generalization. Students who are final year undergraduate students and aspire to join management studies in the same cities would participate in the study.

3. Phase One: Marketing Audit Instrument

The checklist used for auditing will be designed in such a way that it will capture all the activities performed by each institution in marketing in five areas:

- Digital marketing (website quality, frequency of social media activities, search engine visibility)
- Placement communication (whether the placement information is available or not and in which form)
- Presence in traditional media (outdoor, print, radio)
- Event marketing
- Relationship marketing (alumni relationship, school level)



Figure 2: Five-Dimension Audit Framework

4. Phase Two: Student Perception Survey

The student questionnaire will capture the sources of information relied upon during the search at the institute, importance ranking of factors that influence their decision-making based on the outcomes of the fuzzy AHP (chances of placement, references, teaching staff, cost, infrastructure) and awareness of the institute's specific marketing campaigns in Bihar.

5. Phase Three: Administrator Interviews

Semistructured interviews with marketing or admissions managers from 6 to 8 institutes will examine issues such as the development of strategy, budgeting, perceived efficiency, and limitations. Interviews will be thematically coded and used to help interpret the audit and survey data.

6. Analytical Approach

Audited data will be presented in frequency and percentage forms showing the number of institutes that practise each of the practices. Data collected through the survey will be analyzed using a descriptive approach. The comparative analysis will entail comparing the institute priority scores and student importance rankings, to come up with the degree of alignment at the dimension level.

IV. ANALYSIS

1. Observable Marketing Postures

It is apparent from the secondary evidence that there is a split picture. On one side of the divide, there are institutes like CIMAGE Patna, which have conducted multichannel digital acquisition drives, and the results of which include more than 1,100 admissions and an increase of 68% in ROAS. On the other side of the divide, institutes like Mithila Institute of Management have used outdoor hoardings and unipoles in Darbhanga, Madhubani, and Patna, but with no mention of any digital efforts. In between these two ends lie government institutes and legacy institutes like LNMI and CIMP, where the major marketing artefacts are prospectuses and placement brochures.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Marketing Emphasis vs. Evidence of Effectiveness

Dimension	Observable Institute Practice	Evidence Source	Alignment with Established Choice Determinants
Placement communication	CIMP publishes recruiter list and NIRF rank ; many regional institutes publish no placement data	Institutional; Collegedunia	Low alignment at regional level. Placement is top choice determinant, yet many institutes provide no verifiable data.
Digital acquisition	CIMAGE reports 1,100+ admissions via Meta/Google	Vendor case study	Potentially high. Digital reach does not substitute for placement evidence.
Outdoor/regional visibility	MIM campaign across three cities during admission season	Vendor case study	Moderate. Builds awareness but does not address outcome concerns.
Legacy and accreditation signaling	LNMI emphasises 50-year legacy, government affiliation ; CIMP	Institutional prospectuses	Moderate. Credible but not directly outcome-focused.

Dimension	Observable Institute Practice	Evidence Source	Alignment with Established Choice Determinants
	emphasises NBA accreditation		
Event-based marketing	CIMAGE Career Mahakumbh: 32,000 registrations, 450 admissions	Vendor case study	High potential. Events can demonstrate campus experience, addressing uncertainty.

2. Placement Communication Gap

Perhaps the most significant piece of data to have emerged from the current dataset pertains to placement communication. Placement potential ranks as the number one choice determinant for national studies. However, the presence of placement information from Bihar institutes is quite varied. According to Collegedunia, IIM Bodh Gaya offers a median package salary of 12.12 LPA, highest salary package being 45.63 LPA, CIMP offering a median package of 6.50 LPA, Amity Patna has a median package of 6.95 LPA, and LNMCBM Muzaffarpur has a median package of 5.72 LPA. There are many institutes listed that do not provide any placement information. It thus means that comparison of institute performance by prospective students will vary immensely.

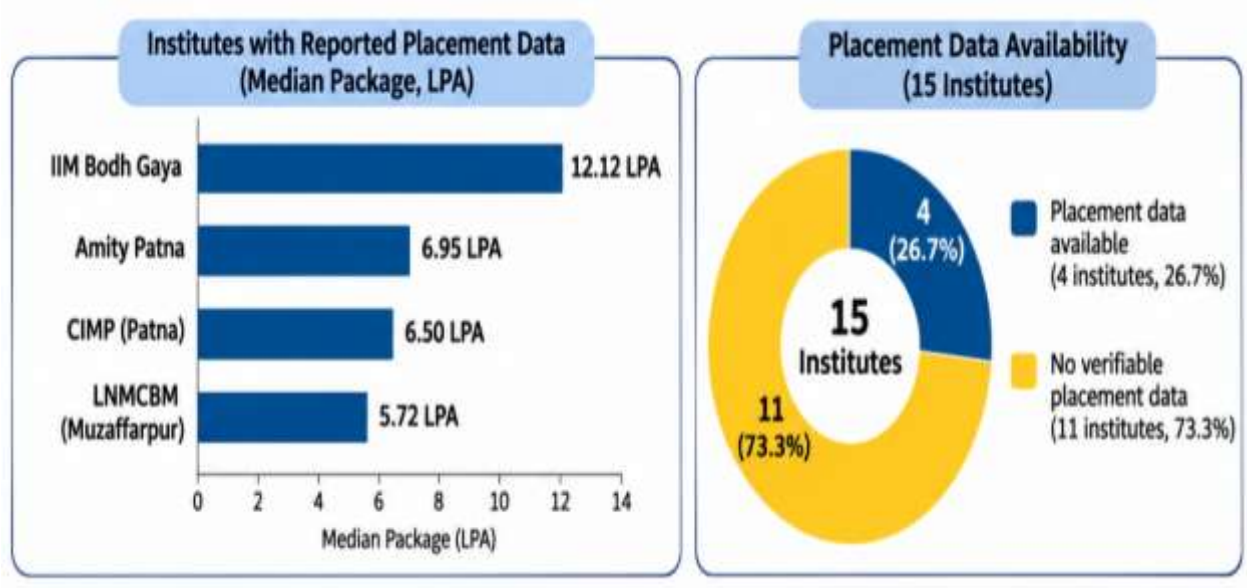

Figure 3: Placement Data Availability and Reported Outcomes

3. Channel Mix and Investment Asymmetry

According to CIMAGE's case study, a lot of money is being spent on digital activities, even to the tune of ₹50 lakh for one single event campaign. While no such information is available from any other institutes in Bihar, the fact that there is no case study from other vendors suggests either that other institutes have not spent in the same way or that their agencies have not published any case study. While the campaign by Mithila Institute of Management was an intercity campaign but was limited only to outdoor channels. The blog of Muzaffarpur agency claims that the use of traditional tools like pamphlets and flex hoardings has become less effective and that institutes need to resort to

hyperlocal SEO, videos and WhatsApp automation in order to stay competitive.

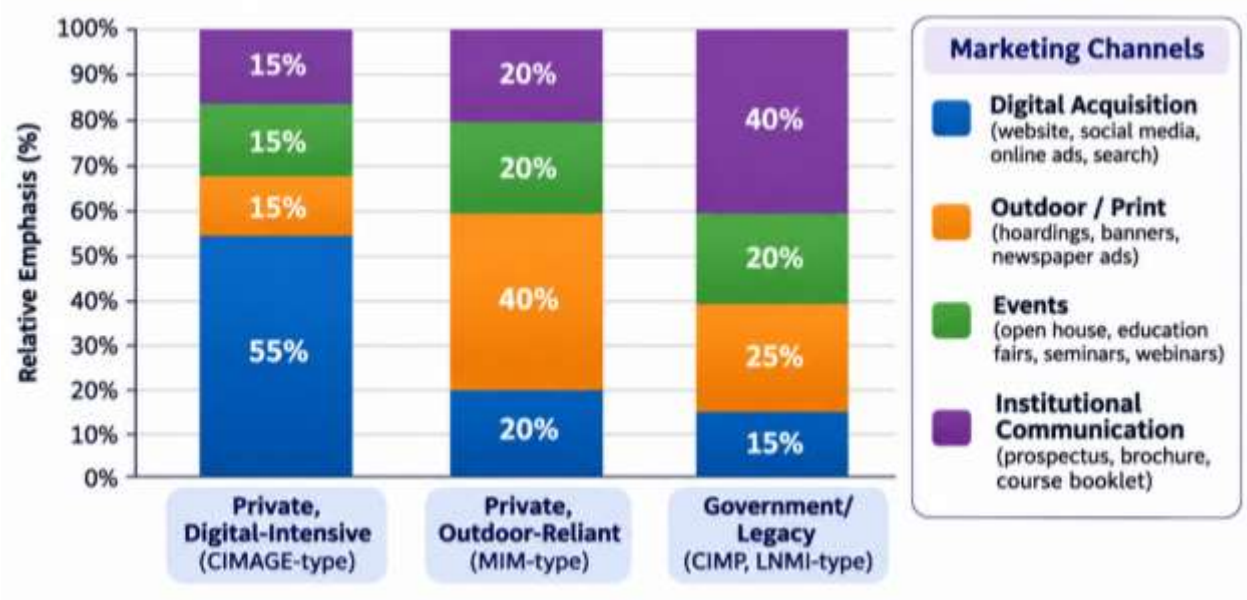

Figure 4: Illustrative Channel Emphasis by Institute Type

4. Discussion

Three conclusions can be drawn based on the findings. Firstly, the management education market of Bihar is characterized by high levels of heterogeneity in terms of marketing sophistication, varying from the use of data-driven digital acquisition to institutionally-rooted communications. Secondly, the placement communication – the measure that is most closely related to the key choice determinant in national studies – is highly uneven and often missing, especially at regional institutes. Thirdly, the publicly available sources include vendor-made documents discussing marketing strategies but not allowing for their independent evaluation.

Consequently, the institute that is using outdoor media and institutionally-rooted prestige without reporting its placement results will under-communicate the key dimension for future students. At the same time, an exclusively data-driven digital acquisition strategy that produces leads but does not report the success of placements will produce volume but not quality.

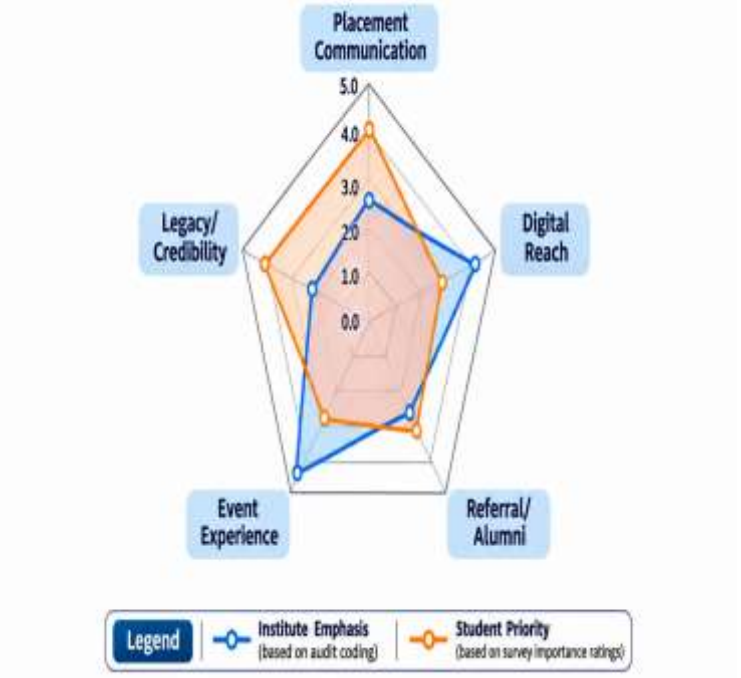

Figure 5: Proposed Alignment Analysis Output

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyse the marketing practices of the management institutes of Bihar, with the help of secondary information that was available. The study revealed a market that had a lot of differences. CIMAGE Patna has done a lot of efforts in the area

of online acquisition and events marketing, and the results claimed by them, if true, indicate that it is one of the leaders in marketing practice in the state. Mithila Institute of Management has adopted regional outdoor marketing, targeting the Mithila region. CIMP and LNMI are some of the government and legacy institutes who still use institutional communications as their marketing tool focusing on accreditation, ranking, and legacy.

The most critical insight relates to placement communication. At the national level, research studies have indicated that placement opportunities form the major determining factor behind the decisions of Indian management students to apply to particular colleges. However, verified placement figures are known to be available for just a handful of colleges in the state of Bihar. Among those that do provide information, there is large variability ranging from IIM Bodh Gaya's median of 12.12 LPA to LNMCBM Muzaffarpur's median of 5.72 LPA, and some colleges do not report any figures at all.

The drawbacks of this paper are many. First, it uses vendor case studies which are by their very definition promotional and not independently verifiable. Second, it uses institute prospectuses that paint institutes in a favourable light. Third, it uses directory data that prove the existence of institutes but do not speak to any marketing activities. Fourth, there is no use of primary data collection here and the results presented should not be taken as a representative survey of marketing strategies used in Bihar's management institutes. What it does offer is an evidence-based understanding of observed trends and a well-defined research design for collecting the missing primary evidence.

The practical implication for institutes can be considered conditional but actionable. If the trends observed nationally hold true, then institutes that spend money on verifiable placement communication and referrals will be better at communicating than institutes that rest on their laurels or infrastructural claims. This can be tested through the survey research proposed here.

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