

## OFFBEAT CAREER...RURAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION



## A story of resurgence

This management degree will play a crucial role in this transformative phase of the country's economy

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While the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact have disrupted the urban economy, the effect on rural India has been much worse. With millions of migrant workers returning to their villages, the massive reverse migration has also created a need to create new growth pathways in rural India.

However, it is possible that the rural economy may drive India's economic rebound, since much of it is driven by the consumer necessities. Therefore, when the pandemic and the lockdown dent the secondary and tertiary industries, primary industry and other stakeholders of the rural economy – agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and dairy – may overcome the crisis.

### What is Rural Management?

Rural Management education is the study of managing and optimising agricultural resources effectively. It also includes planning and executing rural development programmes, promoting rural livelihoods, and engineering diverse livelihood opportunities outside of agriculture for the rural population. The impact of COVID-19 will have long-term implications on the rural economy. This is why the Rural Management curriculum and syllabus will become crucial to deal with this transformative phase of the rural economy.

The field is diverse; hence open to people from different educational backgrounds, skill sets and work experience. Any student who has completed his/her graduation from science, arts, commerce, agriculture, dairy science, veterinary science, arts, engineering, allied health sciences and similar disciplines with minimum 50% marks aggregate can apply. However, individual institutions may have specific requirements. Students will need to produce scores of CAT/ XAT/ NMAT/ MAT/ CMAT/ ATMA/ GMAT or take the admission test conducted by the specific institute. Junior-level execu-

tives can also enroll for the course to boost their career.

### Career prospects

An estimated 30 lakh NGOs operate in rural India. New entrepreneurs have moved from big cities to set up agri-tech start-ups in tier II and III towns. Multinationals outsourcing their processes to smaller towns are already reshaping the job landscape. Of a staggering 6.3 crore MSMEs manufacturing over 6,000 products, more than 50% operate in rural India. Add to this, the massive government machinery that works in rural India. With governments (both central and state), and other organisations conducting feasibility and impact studies of schemes in these areas, there will be a need for rural development and management professionals.

An MBA in Rural Management can bring employment in rural development agencies and flagship development programmes relating to livelihoods, education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, handicrafts, cooperatives and producer organisations, non-government development organisations, public foundations, banking and finance institutions, consultancies, agribusiness organisations, information and communication technology (ICTs) firms, national and international donors engaged in promoting rural development, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) and philanthropy divisions of organisations. A student with right skill set may also choose to become an entrepreneur.

The average starting salary ranges from ₹3 lakhs to ₹12 lakhs per annum for positions as varied as Sales/Business Development Manager, Rural Development Officer, Research Officer, Rural Executives, Rural Manager, Senior Program Officer, Trainer, Researcher, Consultant, Project Co-ordinator/ Project, Purchase/ Vendor Development Manager, Business Development Executive, Sales Officer, and National Sales Development Manager.

If you interested in contributing to India's on-going transformation, this might be the right career choice for you.

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