

EDUCATIONPLUS

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Sudeshna Sengupta

Over the last few years, there has been a lot of brouhaha about how little youngsters are reading nowadays. Parents constantly ask how to get their children to read books at a time when technology offers a gamut of attractive tools. While pondering over this tussle between reading and watching, I remembered the words of Groucho Marx, American comedian, writer, film, radio and television star: “I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.”

For youngsters today, reading could be linked to watching and vice versa, as mobile phones have become ubiquitous. So where does the problem lie? Is it the way reading happens and the purpose? Does this suit the kind of immersive reading that earlier generations have known?

Let us consider a few valid arguments to support reading in the usual, conventional way.

Reading helps develop cognitive skills, including language acquisition, vocabulary, and comprehension. It stimulates the imagination and helps in critical thinking. This naturally culminates in a formidable communicative skill

Reading and watching can co-exist, as both play an important role in a child's development when used mindfully

and the art of writing is enhanced as well. When we read, we think, decide, decode, deliberate and then state our truths and beliefs. As readers, one has to create mental images. Apart from being a leisure activity, reading can also strengthen familial bonds when stories are shared, discussed and reflected upon. What is imperative here is to under-

Books versus screen



stand is reading should not be forced down children's throats. This may lead to a deep-rooted aversion. Reading should be engaging and enjoyable.

When it comes to watching, children learn concepts easily when there is visual learning. The scope for multi-sensory experiences is also appealing. With digital

platforms being a source of content, the array of resources available offers a diversity of perspectives and ideas even when one is within the four walls of a home.

**Shared experiences** While no one can deny that technology is here to stay, is it possible to strike a balance between reading and

watching? For example, what if adults were to be more proactive and design our lives to share the old and the new? For example, pick up the morning newspaper and show the children how it looks, feels and reads. Children learn best by imitation, so we need to practise what we wish our children to absorb.

How about visiting bookshops and choosing titles that the children want to read? If they like The Lion in the Library, do not buy Cinderella. If they like Nimmi's Wiggly Tooth do not give them Peter Pan. The time for Cinderella and Peter Pan will come. Spend time reading a book with them. Young children are more adap-

table and curious. Ask questions about the story, discuss who they liked and why, make them critical thinkers even as you power their imagination.

Follow this routine when they watch something. Sit with them and guide them to watch things that are enjoyable and informative. If they want to see Paw Patrol, ask them what is so special about the dogs. Guide them to thinking about loyalty towards family and friends.

When you start watching what they love to watch and read what they enjoy reading it becomes a shared experience. We need to frame a schedule for our engagements with our children. There can be a reading weekend and a watching hour. There can be a bookshop visit and a 'choose-your-entertainment' evening. There can be a 'dress-up' as your favourite book character and a 'family holiday video hour' as well. Do not make them choose between the two.

The book and the screen can co-exist, as both are realities of life. So, prepare children to love what they are doing. It could be reading or watching; both play an important role in a child's development when used mindfully, while also giving them the freedom of choice.

The writer is the Academic Director at Vedanya International School.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Secret of Work National Level Scholarship Test

A competition organised by the Aaryajanani Trust, in association with Ramakrishna Math.

**Eligibility:** Open to students between 18 to 30 years

**Rewards:** Up to ₹50,000 (one-time)

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** February 15

www.b4s.in/edge/SWRNI

Narotam Sekhsaria Scholarship Programme

An initiative of the Narotam Sekhsaria Foundation to support meritorious students continue their higher education.

**Eligibility:** Open to Indian citizens under 30 years (as of January 31, 2024) who have completed or are nearing completion of their graduate degree from an accredited Indian university and have enrolled in postgraduate degrees at top institutions in India or abroad starting Fall 2024. Those awaiting acceptance can apply, but scholarship is conditional upon securing admission.

**Rewards:** Interest-free scholarship loan and mentorship guidance.

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** March 14

www.b4s.in/edge/NSPG

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development Internship

An opportunity offered by the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), New Delhi.

**Eligibility:** Open to postgraduate or research students pursuing studies at recognised universities and research institutes.

**Rewards:** Up to ₹5,000 monthly and other incentives.

**Application:** Through email or post to: NIPCCD, Coordination Unit, 5 Siri

Institutional Area, Hauz Khas New Delhi - 110016 Email ID: pu-nipccd@gov.in

**Deadline:** March 31

www.b4s.in/edge/NIPCI

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

Discover your area of interest

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This career counselling column may help



OFF THE EDGE  
Nandini Raman

I am in Class 9 and have decided to take Physics, Chemistry and Biology (PCB) in Class 11. My interests are Anatomy, Psychology, and so on. What I can do after Class 12? Vishnu

Dear Vishnu,  
Taking PCB in Class 11 and 12 opens up various opportunities in the fields of Biology, Medicine, Psychology, and related areas. You can opt for an MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine or Bachelor of Surgery) and specialise in fields, such as surgery, internal medicine, paediatrics, and so on. You can become a dentist by doing a BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery).  
Under the Allied Health Sciences, you could consider a B.Sc. Nursing, Bachelor of Physiotherapy, B.Sc. Biotechnology. Under Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, you can explore B.A. or B.Sc. in Psychology leading to careers in clinical psychology, counselling, research, or educational psychology. You could also choose a B.Sc. in Anatomy and Physiology or Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm), B.Sc. in Biomedical Sciences, or a B.V.Sc. (Bachelor of Veterinary Science).

To pursue these, you have to prepare for competitive exams, such as NEET. Consult a career counsellor to help identify your specific interests, strengths, and potential career paths to make informed decisions. Your interests may evolve as you

grow, so stay open to new experiences and opportunities.

I am passionate about art but don't know about good institutes or career paths. Aditya

Dear Aditya,  
Art includes painting, drawing, sculpture, digital art, photography, graphic design, illustration and so on. Experiment with different mediums and styles to identify what you enjoy. Then you can choose a career path that excites you. Options include Fine Artist, an Illustrator, a Graphic Designer, an Art Educator, an Art Therapist, a Curator or a Gallery Owner. Hone your skills by attending workshops and taking courses. Build a portfolio of your work, as it is crucial when applying for an art programme or seeking employment. For formal education and training, look up institutions such as Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), and the Pratt Institute, in the U.S.. Connect with artists, art professors, and professionals and attend exhibitions and event to build your network. Publish your work online on social media platforms and connect with a wider audience. Keep an eye out for competitions, aids, and grants to artist residencies to gain exposure.

I am doing a Bachelor's in Medical Lab Technology. I am interested in joining the Army. Will I be eligible after my graduation? Zubair

Dear Zubair,  
You may be eligible, provided you meet certain

criteria and clear the relevant selection process. The Indian Army offers several entry schemes for candidates, including medical and paramedical fields. Stay updated with their official recruitment notifications and guidelines at https://www.joinindianarmy.nic.in/ where eligibility criteria, application process, and details for each role and entry scheme will be uploaded. You need to meet age requirements, and physical fitness standards, score a minimum percentage in your MLT degree, and clear the Army entrance exams, interviews, and medicals as part of the selection process.

The Army Medical Corps (AMC) recruits medical professionals, including MLT graduates, for various roles as a Short Service Commissioned (SSC) Officer with the option to extend the service. Army Paramedical Staff Recruitment offers paramedical staff positions, including laboratory technicians through direct recruitment or competitive exams. Military Nursing Service (MNS) may have positions for MLT graduates in specific capacities. Short Service Commission (Non-Technical) roles where your skills might be relevant is also an option.

I am a Class 12 (Biology and Psychology) student. I am interested in Neurosciences and Forensics. What are the degrees in this? Also is there anything I can I do to ensure a merit or scholarship to study psychology?

To pursue a career in Neurosciences and Forensics, you can consider

a Bachelor's followed by a Master's and a PhD in Neurosciences and Forensics respectively. To secure a scholarship for Psychology and maintain a strong academic record in Class 12. A high percentage will make you eligible for merit-based academic scholarships offered by colleges and universities across the country and overseas as well. Contact the scholarships/financial aid office of the universities that you plan to apply to. They will provide detailed information on available scholarships and their application process. Research and apply well in advance of your intended enrollment date as each scholarship programme has a specific eligibility criteria and a reviewing process of validating the requirements and documents.

Scoring exceptionally well in the entrance exam for your Bachelor's admission also increases your chances of securing academic merits/scholarships. Many universities are attached to various non-profit foundations, private organisations and charities that offer various scholarships to deserving, meritorious and needy students. The state and national governments also provide scholarship opportunities for exceptional students. Check for these at the college/university admissions office.

**Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.**

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

The push to integrate the Humanities subjects with regular Engineering curriculum can benefit both disciplines

Brainerd Prince

Today, there is a big push to integrate the Humanities with conventional Engineering curricula, as students need to be aware of technological advances as well as the changing requirements of the job market. Engineering graduates from India have been faring poorly in getting jobs, which has warranted a much-needed correction in curriculum design. This is where the Humanities make an important contribution by teaching critical thinking and communication skills along with other transdisciplinary courses. Emphasis on integrating the Humanities is already a

A two-way street



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

central pillar of Engineering curricula in certain universities. The execution of interdisciplinary efforts has provided an important opportunity to critically evaluate the learning objectives of both subjects. However, with many Humanities programmes being shut down due to lack of funding, a less-asked question is whether there is a need to revamp the Humanities curriculum as well? Can Engineering studies contribute to the re-imagination of the Humanities?

Four insights

Although both disciplines are concerned with problem solving, the difference lies in the methodology followed. Here are four key ways in which insights from Engineering can be applied to Humanities.

First is the approach of practical and real-world problem-solving. The Humanities focus on the conceptual and theoretical nature of problems. Grounding them in daily life will make these subjects more relevant to the world around them.

Second, the Humanities subjects must go beyond ideation and conceptualisation and emphasise the need to find practical solutions.

Third, these solutions must not remain theoretical but must move into the realm of implementation. Engineers tend to put the solution out, creating a strong link to the world around them.

Last, like engineers, practitioners of the Humanities must also measure impact of their ideas.

In an age where academic funding is reducing, a re-imagination of the Humanities with a focus on real-world practical problems, offering practical solutions, implementing them and providing solid, quantifiable measures of social impact is required.

Interdisciplinary studies is not a one-way street. While there is much that Engineering can learn from the Humanities, the reverse is equally true.

The writer is Director, Centre for Thinking, Language and Communication and Associate Professor of Practice, Plaksha University.

SAVE THE DATE

■ APU opens PG applications

Azim Premji University invites applications for its full-time two-year Postgraduate Programmes in Education, Public Health, Development, Education, and Economics in the Bengaluru and Bhopal Campuses.  
**Entrance test:** March 10  
**Deadline:** February 9  
https://bitly.ws/3bypw

■ Young India Fellowship

Ashoka University invites applications for the second round of its Young India Fellowship.  
**Eligibility:** A recognised UG degree or equivalent in any discipline as of July 2024. Final-year UG students who will complete their degree in 2024 can apply. Candidates of all ages are eligible to apply.

academic, geographical, professional and socio-economic backgrounds are welcome.  
**Deadline:** March 4  
https://bitly.ws/3aKcf

■ B.Tech admissions at NITTE

NITTE Deemed-to-be University has commenced the application process for its B.Tech programmes through the NITTE University Common Admission Test (NUCAT)2024.  
**Exam dates:** February 17 and 18  
**Eligibility:** Indian citizens who have passed Class 12 in India must appear for NUCAT 2024 under the General Category. Candidates appearing for Class 12 exams can also apply. Foreign nationals or Persons of Indian Origin or Overseas Citizens of India or those who have passed Class 12 outside India can apply under NRI category. Admissions based on marks secured in Physics, Chemistry and Maths in the Class 12 board exam.  
**Deadline:** February 6  
https://apply.nitte.edu.in/

■ New MOOC course at IIM-B

IIM Bangalore has announced a free six-week online course on New Age Business Models under IIMBx, the institute's digital initiative.  
**Eligibility:** UG and PG students of Business Management and budding entrepreneurs  
**Deadline:** February 29  
https://bitly.ws/3aKqX

■ MBA admissions open

Sri Sri University has begun admissions for its MBA programmes with specialisation in Human Resources, Marketing, Finance, Operations, Business Analytics, Good Governance, Public Policy, and Entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship.

**Eligibility:** A Bachelor's degree from any discipline with an aggregate of 50% (45% for SC/ST) from a recognised university and CAT, MAT, SSU-CET score Final-year students can also apply, provided they can furnish their pass certificate with the minimum cut-off by this August.  
https://bitly.ws/3aKbt

■ Admissions open at IMS Noida

IMS Noida, affiliated to CCS University Meerut, invites application for UG and PG courses in Business Management, Law, Mass Communication, and Information Technology.  
**Eligibility:** For UG course, a pass in Class 12 boards from a recognised board of education. For PG course, a Bachelor's degree in relevant subject.  
https://bitly.ws/3aKbt





THINK  
Aruna Sankaranarayanan

Being amiable, adaptable and accommodating are pro-social attributes that are generally positively regarded. But, like all good things, if they're taken too far, they can be detrimental to a person's well-being. Though we may strive to get along with others, that does not imply that we get trodden over. Drawing your boundaries and learning to say 'no' are important socio-emotional skills that we need to acquire. If you tend to be a people-pleaser at the cost of your well-being, it's time you learn to be a naysayer as well.

In an article in *Psyche*, writer Shayla Love sagely notes that, if you try pleasing everybody, you may

end up pleasing nobody, including yourself. If you're a habitual people-pleaser, you may be putting your relationships and well-being at risk. If a friend asks you to run an errand, you may arrive late for a class that you enjoy immensely and have to contend with the professor's disapproval. When you're always giving in to the demands of others, you may end up with a "vanishing self," an inability to pinpoint your own "desires and needs."

How to say 'no'

Love provides the following tips for learning to say 'no.' Rather than just saying 'yes' automatically, pause every time you receive a request, whether banal or significant. Whenever possible, buy time before giving in. It could be something as trivial as a peer asking for your pen. Earlier, you would simply lend it even if you didn't have another one and then scramble around to bor-

row one. So, instead of just loaning your pen, pause and say, "One sec." Then look into your bag and say, "Sorry, I have only one."

Of course, for more significant demands, it will take a considerable amount of time or effort on your part. It's perfectly

legitimate to say, "I'll get back to you on that." As you ponder over your decision, consider the pros and cons of giving in to the

request. Do you have the bandwidth to take on an additional load? What are the consequences of your saying yes? Will you be set-

ting up further expectations from the person?

If you decide to agree to the request, then consider your reasons for doing so. If you're saying yes only to win the approval of others, then Love thinks you might be saying 'yes' too easily and too often. Additionally, you may want to consider what will happen if you say no. Again, if you're afraid of burning bridges with another person or worried about how you'll be perceived, then you're possibly agreeing due to "fear and anxiety" rather than a genuine desire to help.

You may also start noticing how other people say 'no' and the consequences of their refusals. If a friend says she doesn't watch movies in theatres or a professor says they can't give you an extension, you may feel miffed initially. But does that mean you dislike or despise them? Once you realise that declining requests is rather common, it takes off some of the

sting of saying 'no.'

In his bestselling book, *Give and Take*, Adam Grant reminds us that the most successful people in the workplace tend to be givers, or those who do favours for others without necessarily expecting anything in return. However, his findings also reveal that the least successful engineers, doctors and salespersons tend to be givers. So, Grant cautions us against becoming "pushovers and doormats," by simply acceding to every request.

Grant quotes Abraham Lincoln, a very successful giver no doubt, who recognised his vulnerability: "If I have one vice and I can call it nothing else — it is not to be able to say no!" Perhaps, all givers may take note of Lincoln's words and learn to draw your boundaries by simply saying, 'No.'

The writer is the author of *Zero Limits: Things Every 20-Something Should Know* and blogs at [www.arunasankaranarayanan.com](http://www.arunasankaranarayanan.com).

## Embrace the future

Virtual events solve long-standing marketing challenges and open up a world of innovative opportunities



FREEPIK

Piyush Gupta

In today's dynamic marketing landscape, there's always a never-ending debate between in-person events and virtual events. In-person events used to be the go-to choice for marketers but, today, the demand for virtual events has surged and the rapidly growing market is expected to be worth more than \$240 billion by 2030. It's evident that virtual events are the future.

Virtual fairs, town halls, trade shows, product launches, training and concerts are changing how businesses connect with their audience. They solve long-standing marketing challenges and open up a world of innovative opportunities with two-way communication and data analytics. It is a flexible, cost-effective, and sustainable alternative to traditional events. Features like gamification, 3D environments, thematic templates, multilingual support, and agenda builders boost revenue and enhance return on investments (ROIs). Insights from virtual events help businesses adjust their marketing strategies for tangible results.

While virtual event management has plenty of job opportunities, there aren't enough skilled people. Hence, it becomes important to bridge this gap.

Specific skills

Managing virtual events requires a unique set of skills, different from in-person event planning. It includes filming, broadcasting, scriptwriting, and navigating new technologies. The silver lining is that many already have these skills from their experience with in-person events. Enhancing these may be challenging, but not impossible.

Besides event management, virtual event managers should know what it takes to pull off projects in the digital space. A working knowledge of content creation and marketing and viewing events from both the marketer's and the audience's perspectives is crucial. Understanding data analytics and AI is paramount because it helps

keep track of what people like and respond to.

Transitioning from in-person events to virtual event production requires changing how one's approach. Instead of just planning, the event manager becomes a producer, as there is no room for error. Hence dry runs become crucial and production has to be of a superior quality. Creating a virtual event from scratch demands precision, with minimal room for last-minute changes. Other essential skills include effective communication, adept speaker management, meticulous attention to detail, and a creative mindset.

Strong foundation

A degree in Event Management, Hospitality Management, Business Administration, Marketing, or Communications is a plus. Digital Marketing, Project Management and certifications like Digital Event Strategist (DES), Certified Meeting Professional (CMP), Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP), and Certified Virtual Event Producer enhance one's credentials significantly.

Online courses and workshops help acquire specialised knowledge and skills. One can enroll in courses that offer content management, marketing and promotion of events or video production as well. While dedicated courses are limited, credit courses on virtual events can be highly beneficial for college students.

Practical experience in event planning is highly regarded, and technical proficiency in using platforms and streaming technologies is a key asset. Familiarity with specific tools and platforms is essential. Building a portfolio of successful virtual events will help showcase one's expertise to potential employers.

The corporate world is embracing virtual events, opening up numerous career opportunities. It offers an effective way to connect with new prospects, re-engage existing ones, drive conversions, and track results precisely. The potential for growth knows no bounds!

The writer is the CEO of VOSMOS.

Patriek Karavil

Studying abroad is a dream for many students, but frequently seems unachievable due to the high expenses involved. Scholarships help by providing deserving students with financial assistance. Let's examine several kinds of international student scholarships.

Merit-based

Given for good grades and other achievements, these can cover tuition fees (either wholly or partly) and living expenses. Sometimes extra money is also offered. To qualify, students usually need a high GPA, good scores on tests like GRE/GMAT, and show excellence in academics or research. Often, such students are automatically considered during the admission process but some may need additional documents, like essays or portfolios, to show their skills

and accomplishments. The key here is to be academically strong and well-rounded.

Assistantships

Research Assistantships (RA), Graduate Assistantships (GA), and Teaching Assistantships (TA) are great options to cover tuition and living expenses in exchange for helping a faculty with their research, teach a class (generally at the undergraduate level), or with graduate work. To get any of these, students



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## Ease the burden

Scholarships can be a great way to reduce the financial load involved in studying abroad

must match their skills and interests with a teacher's research and get their approval.

To get an RA, talking to potential faculty and other researchers is important, as they have a big say in the selection process. Not only do these offer financial support, they also let students get hands-on experience and develop research skills.

Unlike RAs, GAs and TAs might involve teaching or doing administrative work alongside studying. Applica-

tions are made through the departments and students need to show exceptional academic performance. These offer a chance for students to gain real-world experience and add to their skill set. It's a bit like getting academic and professional help all in one.

Tuition waivers

Tuition waivers give students a break on tuition fees, either in full or in part. Students can apply directly through the university. The ap-

## Make a difference

What are the skills one requires for a job in the social sector? Read on ...



FREEPIK

Randeep Hundal

Have you ever felt a desire to make a positive impact on the world? Do you dream of a career where success isn't just about personal gain, but about improving the lives of others? If so, a career in the social sector might be what you're looking for. There are programmes such as Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) or certifications from accredited universities to lay the foundation for a fulfilling career.

The social sector involves wide range of organisations and initiatives, from non-profits and humanitarian agencies to community development projects and advocacy groups. At its core, your work will involve contributing to developing a fairer and more equitable society. For those looking to transition into this field, here are skills that will make a

difference.

**Passion and commitment:** Professionals are driven by an enduring passion for the causes they support. This isn't a fleeting interest, but a deep and unwavering commitment to make the world a better place and to improve society.

**Adaptability and resilience:** Change is a constant, and challenges are inevitable. Being adaptable and resilient is essential to navigate this ever-evolving landscape.

**Communication and advocacy:** Effective communication and speaking up for what one believes in can make a big difference. Leaders understand the significance of articulating their objectives and advocating for a worthy cause. These abilities help them connect with others, make more people aware of their cause, and get support to bring about change.

**Ethical and legal knowledge:** Operating within ethical

and legal boundaries is fundamental. Therefore, you should ensure that the initiatives you support maintain integrity and credibility.

**Fundraising and resource management:** Getting the money to support projects and programmes is vital. Not only does one need to know how to find funds but also to use them wisely to execute crucial projects that can make a difference.

**Data analysis and evaluation:** Making smart choices is important for projects to work well. Therefore, gathering information and using specialised methods to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes is important to ensure that resources are being used wisely to achieve the goals.

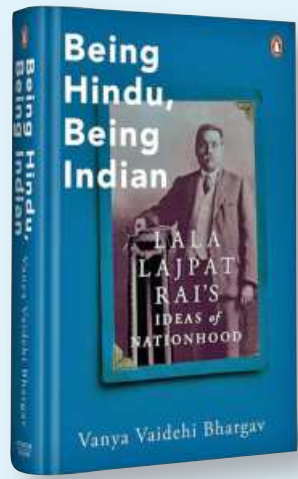
**Project management and leadership:** When it comes to handling complex projects, these skill help projects stay on the right track. Strong leadership ensures that teams and resources are working efficiently and that the projects are moving steadily toward their goals.

**Building trust, and inclusivity:** To do well, it is important to have skills like understanding different cultures, build trust, and making sure everyone feels valued. One needs to understand the communities you are working with and win their trust and respect their opinions.

**Networking and collaboration:** Building relationships and working together is crucial for a project's success. Work to establish connections and collaborate with organisations and communities to help magnify the positive effects of the work, causing a chain reaction of positive change.

The writer is Chairman of Woke India Foundation.

### ON THE SHELF



■ Being Hindu, Being Indian

In popular imagination, Lala Lajpat Rai is frequently associated with Bhagat Singh. By assassinating J.P. Saunders, Singh avenged Rai's death, caused by a police lathi charge, and was hanged for it. Lajpat Rai is also remembered for his fervent opposition to British rule.

In recent decades, however, historians have converged with the Hindu Right in rediscovering Lajpat Rai as an ideological ancestor of Hindutva. But what then explains Rai's wholehearted approval of the Congress-Muslim League cooperation, and attempt to endow Hindus and Muslims with bonds of common belonging? Why did he reinterpret India's medieval history to highlight peaceful coexistence between Hindus and Muslims?

*Being Hindu, Being Indian* offers a comprehensive examination of Lajpat Rai's nationalist thought. By revealing the complexities of Rai's thinking, it provokes us to think more deeply about broader questions relevant to present-day politics: Are all expressions of 'Hindu nationalism' the same as Hindutva? What are the similarities and differences between 'Hindu' and 'Indian' nationalism? Can communalism and secularism be expressed together? How should we understand fluidity in politics? This book invites readers to treat Lajpat Rai's ideas as a gateway to think more deeply about history, politics, religious identity and nationhood.

**Author:** Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav  
**Publisher:** Penguin  
**Price:** ₹1299