

# EDUCATION PLUS

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Megha Gupta

In 2023, when former journalist Amit Arora and Prof. Rakesh Basant, former Dean at IIM-Ahmedabad, organised India's first History Literature Festival (HLF) at Ahmedabad University, they worried that the experiment might fall flat. But, to their astonishment, more than 1000 people turned up on the very first day, demolishing the old cliché about history being a dreary discipline restricted to the walls of classrooms.

Over the past few years, this is becoming somewhat of a norm, with several outside-the-classroom initiatives drawing an ever-expanding audience of students and history enthusiasts across age groups.

**Accessible storytelling**

Eric Chopra who founded Itihāsology, a youth-led history platform in 2019, feels that, apart from the tedious narratives typically found in textbooks, a key reason people avoid engaging with history is the perception that it's distant and not relevant to their lives. Basant agrees and adds that historical narratives tend to mainstream socio-political issues, frequently overlooking the large variety of topics. He also finds that the historical discourse is often devoid of diversity in views. Not surprisingly, then, a common feature running through most such initiatives is an em-

## Plunge into the past

How outside-the-classroom initiatives are redefining History education in India

phasis on captivating and accessible storytelling that explores a wide spectrum of topics from a variety of viewpoints.

The Itihāsology page on Instagram showcases an eye-catching selection of art contextualising bits of history built around it. Chopra and his co-founder Kudrat B Singh also host a history podcast For Old Times' Sake.

Karwaan: The Heritage Exploration Initiative, a student-led history collective founded by Eshan Sharma has created a rich archive of lectures, dialogues and panel discussions featuring eminent intellectuals on YouTube. Past HLF sessions, which can now be viewed on YouTube, include discussions on histories of music, science, technology, archaeology

and food among other things. Historian and author Anirudh Kanisetty has produced a diverse and vibrant body of historical content online, including Echoes of India, a hugely popular podcast on ancient India.

In a country that currently has more than 800 million active Internet users, most of whom are between 16 to 39 years old, the meticulous use of social media helps such initiatives increase their reach and create an accessible archive of their work, without burning a hole in their limited budget.

**Responsible history**

"There is a lot of conversation about the past in today's political landscape, leading to questions, cu-

riosity and concern," says Chopra. While this has undoubtedly contributed to the subject's growing popularity in an age of easy dissemination, it has also led to the rise of fake news and the 'WhatsApp University'.

Against this backdrop, most initiatives feel that they have an urgent responsibility to share well-researched factual history.

As Sharma puts it, "A lot of our audience are new voters and they need to be able to question dominant narratives instead of believing everything they are told. For example, there is a popular story that the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan chopped off the hands of workers who built the Taj Mahal. Yet, there is no concrete evidence for this. Instead,

a vast settlement called Taj Ganj was created for the workers and many of their descendants continue to live there."

Apart from putting out social media posts, videos and podcasts, these initiatives also offer opportunities for deeper online and offline engagement. At Karwaan, participants can join online clubs to discuss books and films around different aspects of history. Itihāsology brings out an annual digital journal for which it invites submissions from school, undergraduate, and postgraduate students, which are reviewed by eminent scholars. Eventually, eight entries, which undergo an exhaustive editorial process, are accepted and published. Heritage walks through

monuments and museums are a popular offline activity. "Historian Sohail Hashmi had conducted our first walk at Delhi's Tughlaqabad Fort in 2019," recalls Sharma. Since then, Karwaan has organised walks in Delhi, Mumbai, Vadodara, Kanpur and Lucknow. At Itihāsology, these walks prompt the young and old to feel, imagine and relate what they see to aspects of their own lives.

History for Peace, a network of educators and civil society members, organises conferences, short talks and workshops through the year and publishes journals containing the lectures and discussions. It has a rich archive of freely available resource material on its website.

At the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, historians have been bringing out illustrated history books for children in Bengali, English and Assamese, under the History for Children initiative supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung South Asia. These are freely available online, and the initiative organises workshops to review them and expand outreach.

Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard once said that, though life must be lived forwards, it can only be understood backwards. Going by the options, there are plenty of avenues available to those interested in understanding life by plunging into the past.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

**SCHOLARSHIPS****Sydney Scholars India Scholarship Programme**

An opportunity offered by the University of Sydney.

**Eligibility:** Open to Indian citizens classified as international students under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and have applied to a UG or PG programme at the University of Sydney but haven't yet commenced studies.

**Rewards:** Free access to training modules, live sessions by Harvard faculty.

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** July 3

[www.b4s.in/edge/ALPSI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/ALPSI)

programme in the last three years. Intermediate level of proficiency in English is required. Annual family income should be less than ₹8 lakhs

**Rewards:** Free access to training modules, live sessions by Harvard faculty.

**Application:** Online

**Deadline:** July 3

[www.b4s.in/edge/ALPSI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/ALPSI)

**Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) Internship Programme**

An opportunity offered by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, for student to understand Trade Remedies Investigations and Trade Defence Measures.

**Eligibility:** Open for PG students or research scholars from recognised universities/institutions.

**Rewards:** Certificate

**Application:** Email or post the General Administration Section of DGTR.

**Deadline:** Round the year

[www.b4s.in/edge/DGCI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/DGCI)

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

**UGAT registrations open**

The All-India Management Association (AIMA) has commenced registration for the Under Graduate Aptitude Test (UGAT) 2024. This standardised test, administered by AIMA

annually, screens candidates for various undergraduate programmes such as Integrated MBA (IMBA), BBA, BCA, BHM, B.Com, and so on.

**Eligibility:** 10+2 in any stream

**Deadline:** June 9

**Test Date:** June 16

Register at

<https://apps.aima.in/UGAT2024>

For more visit

<https://t.ly/SXa-g>

**Timeboxing is the answer**

How to deal with short attention spans, making decisions and allocate your energy and live a mindful life

Marc Zao-Sanders

What is timeboxing? Timeboxing is often conflated and confused with similar-sounding approaches to time management: time-blocking, scheduling, daily planning, single-tasking, calendar management and timetabling ...

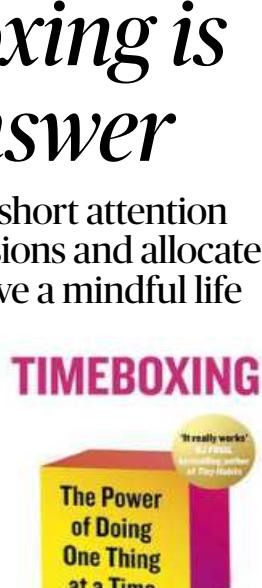
They are collectively and individually unsatisfactory. I propose that timeboxing is the method and mindset of: Selecting what to do, before the day's distractions arise; specifying each task in a calendar, including when it will start and finish; focusing on one thing at a time; doing each to an acceptable (rather than perfect) standard.

This definition accommodates the most important elements of the practice: intentionality, focus, achievement, order, completion and the creation of the timebox itself. It also makes the important point that we should box the time when, and only when, we have the wherewithal to do so. All the rules we make (the law, coding conventions, household policies) as a civilized society are examples of making a set of decisions at the outset, in a moment of cerebral calm and consideration (often by a carefully appointed committee), to help make life smoother in the long run.

Explore the possibility of a student loan to finance yourself. Develop a realistic budget for your study abroad expenses, including tuition, accommodation, living expenses, travel, and other miscellaneous costs. Study the loan terms carefully and assess your ability to repay realistically.

Some universities offer assistantship or internship opportunities to assist professors with research, teaching, or administrative tasks. Check what is available for course and the eligibility requirements.

Though not quite a definition, an alternative and also useful way of thinking about timeboxing is as a synthesis of your to-do list and your calendar. The to-



MARC ZAO-SANDERS

do list tells us what to do. The calendar tells us when to do it. The combination is much more readily actionable and useful than either on its own.

It's also worth distinguishing timeboxing from time-blocking. Time-blocking is the blocking off of time to do something. Timeboxing is time-blocking + committing to getting the task done in time, within the box. In other words, time-blocking is about exclusive focus; timeboxing is exclusive focus + specified outcome.

**Timeboxing basics**  
... Here are the very basics, beyond the definition, for you to familiarize yourself and experiment with, from tomorrow, or even today. You'll need the right mindset. You'll need a positive attitude and a belief that this may work ... As for the method, there are two activities that together constitute timeboxing – planning and doing. Here's what you need to do for each.

Start (before the day). Set a period of time (15 or 30 minutes), before the busyness of the day clouds your mind and impairs your judgement, to decide what's most important and needs to get done.

Plan (before the day). Set a period of time (15 or 30 minutes), before the busyness of the day clouds your mind and impairs your judgement, to decide what's most important and needs to get done.

Set a daily (ideally digital) calendar appointment



tively in the maelstrom of the day.

Finish on time. Get the job done. Do not permit the perfect to be the enemy of the good. Good is usually good enough.

Aim to share what you've done as you finish each timebox. This brings a useful pressure to get it done and make it good enough to share.

You'll get distracted and derailed. Expect this. When it happens, practise coming back to the timebox (return to the calendar), to your original task.

With experience, your distractions will become fewer and shorter-lived.

Timeboxing, is unusually perfect for experimentation as you go. Every morning you wake and have a brand-new chance to try out what you've learnt, tweak it, experiment with it, question it, make it your own. Do not pass up this opportunity! To ease into it, you might like to try timeboxing every other day (Mondays – Wednesdays – Fridays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, say). This sort of arrangement will enable you to contrast with life with timeboxing against a life without.

So, you should now be clear on what timeboxing is and the features it comes with, out of the box, as it were. And you have had multiple strong encouragements to timebox as you go.

Excerpted from Timeboxing: The Power of Doing One Thing at a Time; Marc Zao-Sanders, Penguin, ₹799



for this planning session, first thing in the morning (or last thing the night before). Make the appointment recur so you won't ever miss it.

Review your to-do list. If you don't keep one, start! To-do lists feed timeboxing; the better your to-do list, the better your timeboxing.

Select some of the most important and urgent items from that list and add them to your calendar. Make the best estimate you can about how long each task will take. Don't worry, yet, about the ordering – just get them in.

Start, make mistakes and learn quickly. To begin with, you will frequently underestimate how long tasks take – this is normal.

**Do (during the day)**

Start on time.

Remove distractions, the most dangerous of which by far is your smartphone.

Stick to the plan. Don't second-guess yourself and undermine your earlier decision. Barring an emergency, what you thought earlier in the planning process, when you were calm and clear, is better than what you think to do reac-

**Showcase your skills**

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



OFF THE EDGE  
Nandini Raman

I graduated in 2020 (B.Tech, Civil) and joined the IT sector as a Programme Analyst in 2022. But I don't have any work experience because I was either in training or on the bench. I am now anxious about getting another job. I am interested in Data Analytics and Actuarial Science. Is there some way to gain knowledge and experience and improve my employability profile?

Dear Shikha,  
Start equipping yourself with certifications in Data Analytics and/or Actuarial Science. Join online courses on platforms like Coursera, edX, Udemy and so on to get a taste of what they are. If you like them enough, go deeper. Try and join professional associations, forums, and online communities and attend workshops, webinars, and conferences related to Data Analytics and Actuarial Science to network and engage with professionals, ask questions, seek professional advice and stay updated with current trends. You could find mentorship, internships, and/or job referrals.

Work with online resources, textbooks, and tutorials to develop projects, participate in competitions and build a portfolio to showcase your skills. Look for freelance opportunities, as they will help you get hands-on experience and build relevant skills. Create a professional LinkedIn profile highlighting your skills,

and have been working for a year. I want to do my Master's abroad. Is one year of work experience enough? Also, my financial situation is not very good. So how can I look at study abroad options? Lakshmi

Dear Lakshmi,  
Valid work experience and duration depends on the prerequisites and programme requirements. Some institutions prefer applicants with more work experience, while others may not require any at all. Check the admission criteria and then shortlist the programme. While researching this, also explore the costs involved and the various scholarships and financial aid that you may be eligible for.

Many government, non-profit organisations, and private foundations provide scholarships to international students based on academic merit, financial need, and/or other specific criteria. Apply to as many as possible to increase your chances of securing funding. International students are allowed to work a certain number of hours per week, as this helps with expenses and reduces the financial burden.

Explore the possibility of a student loan to finance yourself. Develop a realistic budget for your study abroad expenses, including tuition, accommodation, living expenses, travel, and other miscellaneous costs. Study the loan terms carefully and assess your ability to repay realistically.

Finally, look for courses

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

I finished B. Com in 2022

CM YK

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**THINK**  
Aruna Sankaranarayanan

**F**ailure. The very word stings. Since failure has strong negative connotations, including scarring us permanently, we tend to avoid it at all costs. However, none of us started off believing that failure was the end of the road. In fact, as infants, we've taken shaky first steps and fallen a few times. But that didn't deter us from trying and eventually walking with ease. Though we're programmed to take failure in our stride quite literally as infants, by the time we enter the portals of formal schooling, we become enculturated to denigrate and shun it.

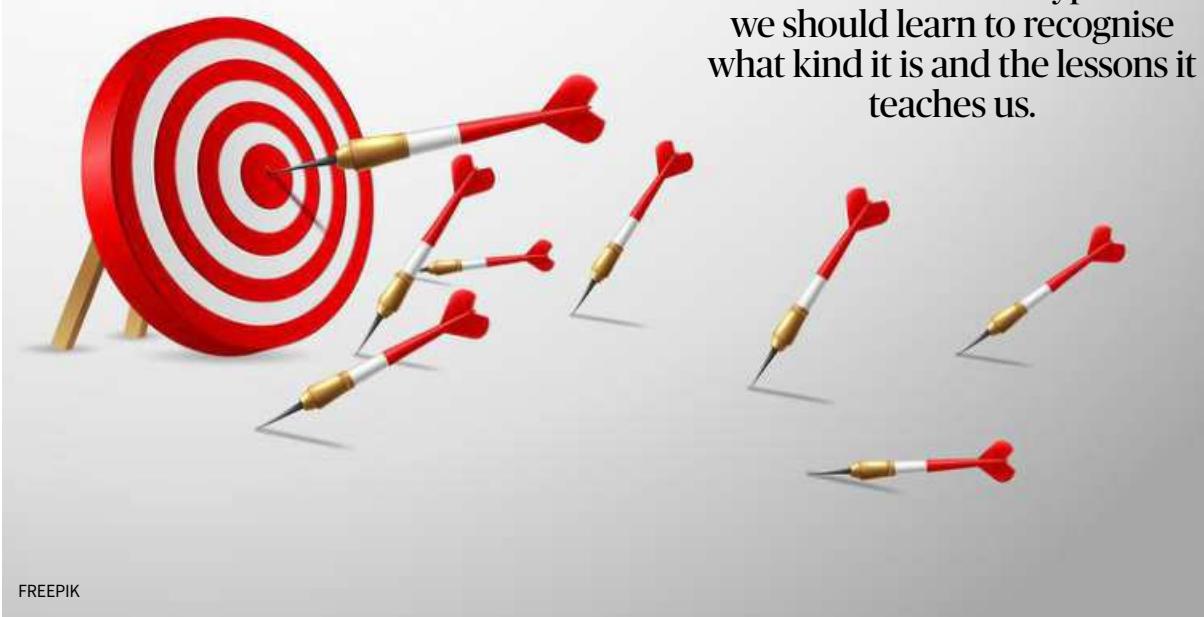
With decades of painstaking research to back up her assertions, psychologist Amy Edmondson pro-

vides a more nuanced perspective on failure in *Right Kind of Wrong*. Rather than demonising all failure, she argues that failure comes in different guises. While we may try to avoid 'bad' failures, we may also learn the craft of "failing well."

Edmondson defines failure as "an outcome that deviates from desired results" including doing poorly in the Stats exam, falling off a bike or having a short story being rejected by a literary magazine. Further, she categorises failure into three types.

**Types of failure**  
Basic failures are ones that could have been easily avoided if we take sufficient care and invest requisite effort. Suppose you fell off your bike because you were trying to push away your hair that was getting in your face on a windy day. Had you worn your helmet, your hair wouldn't have disturbed you. So, that would qualify as a basic failure, as it could have been averted by simply

## Failing well



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Failure is of different types and we should learn to recognise what kind it is and the lessons it teaches us.

you got on the test, thus, cannot be attributed to any single cause. According to Edmondson, complex failures have myriad causes and "often include a pinch of bad luck" as well. However, the lesson you may glean from this failure is that putting off studying till the last minute can be risky at times.

As Edmondson avers, these criteria may be used as guidelines to determine whether a failure is intelligent. Knowledge only advances when we're willing to embrace intelligent failures. Venturing into new territory always entails uncertainty. Whether it's a science experiment, your first time living on your own or a job interview, unless you try, you cannot learn from experience. If you fail, don't fret. Instead, analyse why an experience didn't pan out as you hoped, learn from it and move on.

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

## Ground control

The field of ground handling presents a plethora of prospects for those aspiring to be at the heart of aviation's operational excellence.



Sanjay Gupta

**I**ndia's aviation sector is soaring to new heights and passenger capacity is expected to increase from 192 million to 420 million in the next four years at the six major Indian airports. The fleet strength of Indian airlines is also expected to grow from 700 to 2,000 aircrafts within the same time frame.

**What it involves**  
This has led to a pressing need for proficient individuals to orchestrate the seamless and safe operations of ground handling services at airports across the country. Ground handling encompasses a spectrum of services vital for the swift transition of an aircraft from landing to take-off. These encompass aircraft marshalling, baggage handling, fuelling, catering, aircraft cleaning, passenger services and aircraft maintenance, all of which collectively ensures the safe, punctual, and efficient operations of airlines and airports.

This, in turn, directly influences the overall passenger experience and bolsters an airline's reputation. Consequently, the demand for skilled ground handling professionals is burgeoning.

**Opportunities**  
Key roles within this domain include:

**Ramp Agent:** Responsible for handling passenger baggage and cargo, handling Ground Support Equipment as well as other related activities when the aircraft is on ground.

**Baggage Handler:** Ensures the proper loading, unloading and transportation of passengers' luggage to designated areas.

**Customer Service Agent:** Facilitates smooth check-ins, assists passengers with inquiries, aids persons with reduced mobility and handles other related activities to ensure a

seamless boarding process.

**Load Control Agent:** Plans, coordinates and produces all loading, weight and balance documents as per company and client airline specifications.

Despite automation, the industry demands highly trained individuals to oversee seamless operations. Specialised training is necessary for tasks such as operating ground service equipment and loading cargo to maintain safety and efficiency. This requires the development of industry-specific skills, including interaction with AI and ML technologies, and the honing of soft skills for passenger interactions. To bridge the skills gap, a new talent pathway is essential, with specialised training academies offering accelerated programmes to prepare individuals for diverse roles within the aviation industry.

### Courses

Currently, many training academies offer a Certificate in Ground Handling and Airport Operations, spanning 30 days or more.

Prospective students are required to meet specific eligibility criteria such as Class 12 pass certificate for Ramp Agent and a degree for Customer Service Executive (CSE). Upon successful completion, students receive placement assistance.

Ground handling is pivotal for the aviation industry and offers a diverse spectrum of career opportunities for those seeking a dynamic and fast-paced work environment.

A career in ground handling also opens up avenues within the hospitality and services sector owing to a close proximity between them. With India's aviation sector on a growth trajectory, the demand for adept ground handling professionals is poised to escalate.

The writer is CEO, Air India SATS.

Dr. T. P. Sethumadhavan

**A**gribusiness Management is fast emerging as a course that can create employment opportunities in agribusiness, banking, insurance, and allied agriculture sectors. It combines agriculture, business and project management disciplines and covers different areas such as crop agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, poultry production, fisheries, horticulture, rural development, food processing, food retail, co-operation, food e-business, dairy business, project management, entrepreneurship, logistics management, and startups.

### Courses and institutes

A range of courses are available: certificate, diploma, undergraduate postgraduate. While some universities in India offer BBA or B.Com. in Agribusiness Management, UG courses are limited.

However there are plenty of postgraduate courses. The Hyderabad-based National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) offers a two-year PG Diploma programme in Agribusiness Management with admissions being based on scores in CAT. The course

is open to students who have a degree in Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Horticulture, Fisheries, Agriculture engineering or allied subjects with 50% aggregate. MANAGE also offers placement assistance in India and abroad.

Other institutes that offer courses at the PG level include the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) at Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Indore, Kerala Agricultural University;

DY Patil University, Kolhapur; Symbiosis Institute of International Business, and Banaras Hindu University (BHU). MBA programmes are offered by Aligarh Muslim University; ASM Institute of Business Management and Re-

cumstances that wouldn't have been a problem because the portions included only one chapter that you understood quite well. But, just as you got down

to studying, some visitors landed up unannounced. As nobody else was at home, you ended up entertaining them for about an hour. Soon as they left, you

hit your books. But, within 10 minutes, there was a power outage. You studied with a torchlight, but found it hard to work out problems. The low grade

## Gateway to agro-business



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Agribusiness Management combines agriculture, business and project management disciplines and offers a range of career opportunities

search, Pune; DBS Dehra Dun; University of Mysore; Institute of Agribusiness Management, Bikaner; Amity University, and Parul University. The Institute of Rural Management and Anand and National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad, offer PG programmes in Rural Development but focus on Agriculture Business Management.

Many universities in India and South Asia offer diploma and certificate programmes in customised areas such as plant nurseries, dairy processing, poultry processing, post-harvest technologies in crop production, fish process-

ing, feed milling, dairy cattle production, entrepreneurship management, supply chain management, commercial farming, food processing, and retail management. The National Skill Development Corporation also offers various skill development courses. Various agriculture universities and IIMs offer doctoral programmes in different emerging areas in Agribusiness.

For those looking to study abroad, options are available in the European Union, Australia, the U.K. and Southeast Asian countries. The University of Wageningen and the HAS Univer-

sity in Netherlands; the University of Western Australia and the University of Newcastle in Australia offer stakeholder-based courses.

### Opportunities

On completion, students can become entrepreneurs, establish start-ups or work in agri-food based MSMEs. Those who complete PG programmes can either go in for research or work as faculty in academia or research institutions. Other options include establishing

start-ups or working in agri-food based Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Agribusiness Management professionals can also work in banks and companies such as fertilizer firms, cattle feed manufacturers, dairy processing centres, poultry processing units, seed companies, NGOs, agri-insurance companies, technology providers, retail firms, co-operatives such as Amul, IFFCO, milk unions, among others.

Other opportunities include roles in the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the business incubation centres of Indian Council for Agricultural Research, start-ups, food retail companies, cargo and export management companies among others.

It has been forecast that, by 2025, of the total retail market, 70% will be food related. In order to explore the increasing need for ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook food products, country requires skilled Agribusiness Management professionals to address the emerging opportunities and challenges.

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## Beyond brilliance



posed by Daniel Goleman (with five key components of Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills).

A simple literature review would show several study models and frameworks to understand and assess EI. Two of the most well-known are the Four-Branch Model proposed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (with four key components of Perceiving, Using, Understanding, and Managing Emotions) and the Mixed Model pro-

dents have become increasingly common, raising questions about the underlying factors contributing to these mental health challenges. The pressure to excel academically, coupled with the demands of social and extracurricular activities, can take a toll on mental health.

A holistic educational approach that nurtures mind, body, and spirit and empowers students to succeed not only in academics but also in their personal and professional lives is essential. Emotional in-

### Action points

One intervention mechanism would be to identify, support and foster comprehensive student support services that provide access to peer support and counselling, mental health resources, and wellness programmes.

Another step that can bring about a significant change is incorporating EI training into curricula. Courses on topics such as leadership, teamwork, and conflict resolution help students develop essential interpersonal skills.

Through experiential learning opportunities, such as group projects and internships, students learn to navigate complex social dynamics and communicate effectively with others. By instilling values of integrity and compassion, universities equip students to become responsible citizens and ethical leaders in their fields.

Student Support Centres that offer group therapy, workshops, and outreach programmes will help raise awareness about mental health issues and promote emotional well-being. Universities should focus on integrating mindfulness and wellness practices into campus life to help students manage academic pres-

sures and cultivate resilience.

Beyond academic coursework, extracurricular activities play a vital role. Participation in clubs, sports teams, and community service initiatives provides students with opportunities to collaborate, lead, and develop empathy. These experiences foster a sense of belonging and connectedness and enhance feeling of well-being.

Promotion of cultural diversity and inclusivity is another aspect to make students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and respected, cultivate empathy and global awareness. This enriches students' learning experiences and prepares them to navigate an increasingly interconnected world.

Ultimately, universities play a crucial role in shaping not only students' academic knowledge but also their emotional intelligence and personal growth. A holistic approach that addresses the multifaceted needs of students will prepare them to succeed in a diverse and dynamic world.

The writer is Associate Director - Student Welfare, and Associate Professor, Department of Data Science and Computer Applications, Manipal Institute of Technology, MAHE, Manipal.