

EDUCATION PLUS

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Mini Krishnan

Last month, I saw a 10-page presentation developed by a class teacher for each of her students. Titled "I Can Be Anything", every page showed different professions in recognisable gear, with the face of the child it was meant for. Astronaut, doctor, teacher, wildlife expert and so on. The teacher was "motivating" the students in her care. How old were the children? Three. Yet, in the shape of fun, the slow process of performance expectations, of prodding and nudging, had begun. Do this. Be that. On the other hand, when left by himself to read and dream, I have seen a nine-year-old make up his book on dinosaurs. The cover was a huge dino tooth!

The mainstream education system has always worked on the intellect and job skills of students,



Towards a peaceful world

As we enter a New Year, we need to give students a moral GPS that can help them navigate a confusing and conflicted world that goes from excitement to disaster mode too suddenly and too often

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

oneself, rather than knowing yourself and your 'inner world'.

Can values be taught?

Exactly 20 years ago a group of writers, counsellors and teachers united to write a series of values education textbooks for Indian schools, also known to previous generations as moral education books. Even as teen suicides exploded in India 10 years ago and children turned against parents and friends, the chant in most households was still "As if values can be taught!" But, let's not forget, that humans, children and youngsters do not rush spontaneously to sacred texts instead of to films, videos

and books on sensation, titillation and adventure. Today, children are not surrounded by a safety net of an extended family. Most are from homes where both parents work hard all day and hardly have more than an hour for their children before the latter fall asleep!

Values have to be taught exactly as children are taught to be clean and sit up straight at the table and eat neatly. They have to be trained to see others as being as important as themselves. You may not push or punch your classmates if they disagree with you. You will be polite to staff and to teachers and elders. You cannot yell in public places and disturb others.

Empathy, justice, truth-telling have to be ingrained.

Some children are naturally more sensitive and thoughtful. Many are quite the opposite. Anger and fear management also need to be discussed. Loneliness is very much a modern child's companion with parents busy with their careers and hardly a sibling to be seen in most households. In modern times, every aspect of a growing child's life is being carefully calibrated, tested, trained, pushed and pounded into some sort of shape acceptable to society while no attention is paid at all to its inner life.

The values and peace education writers wanted

to make a difference. One of the most poignant selections for Class 5 was an account of what Majd Abu Asad, an eight-year-old Palestinian boy told a reporter, which was published by The Little Magazine.

"On March 28, 2002, suddenly the teachers started looking very scared. My parents came to take me home. When we reached home, the water and electricity had been cut. I was thirsty but there was no water. They closed the school. I had to stay at home. I was very angry. I slept a lot. By the time I walked to the store to fetch what my mother needed, I couldn't remember what she had asked for. I was

frightened. I used to be first in class. Now I can barely read. I have forgotten everything."

Emotional succour

This could happen to us. It could happen to your child if a public campaign for peace and values education is not launched formally in schools and colleges and teachers trained to do so.

War is the proverbial last straw. Weighed down by academic load, parental expectations, and lack of family support, the modern child does not have the resilience to manage crises, either of a private nature or something as harsh as war. Peace and values education promotes wellness, strengthens the mind and restores self-confidence and esteem in children. It centres them more soundly in a world of people from diverse backgrounds, living beings and environments so that they can draw emotional succour from a wide network and also nourish the network that supports them. It is a moral GPS, a compass in the backpack of life, which can help young people navigate a world of confusing and conflicting ideas and ideals, a world of ever-changing distractions, and one which goes from excitement to disaster mode too suddenly and too often. Now, more than ever before, actively waging peace is more important than anything else.

The writer is the Editor, Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation

SCHOLARSHIPS

L'Oréal India for Young Women in Science Scholarship

L'Oréal India provides educational scholarships to encourage young women to pursue Science.

Eligibility: Girls who have passed class 12 with 85% in PCB/ PCM/ PCMB in 2022-23 academic year. Annual family income should be less than ₹6 lakhs.

Rewards: Up to ₹2.5 lakhs towards tuition fees and academic expenses

Application: Online
Deadline: January 7
www.b4s.in/edge/PSD5

courses in STEM subjects and have scored at least 50% marks in their previous class. Annual family income should be less than ₹4 lakhs.

Rewards: ₹15,000-20,000 (based on actuals)

Application: Online
Deadline: January 7
www.b4s.in/edge/PSD5

Colgate Keep India Smiling Scholarship Programme

An initiative of Colgate-Palmolive (India). Limited to provide financial assistance to deserving and meritorious students.

Eligibility: Indian students currently enrolled in any year of the Bachelor of Dental Surgery course in a recognised institution Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh and have scored at least 60% marks in Class 12. Annual family income must not exceed ₹8 lakhs.

Rewards: ₹75,000

Application: Online
Deadline: January 31
www.b4s.in/edge/KSS13

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

provide students with guidance, clear doubts and answer career-associated queries to help them make an informed decision regarding their career path.

Additionally, Internshala Trainings will also offer a 10% discount on its short-term skills trainings to learners who attend these sessions. For details, visit <https://bit.ly/ISTmicrosoft>

Partnership

Internshala Trainings has partnered with TakeLessons by Microsoft to offer free sessions on the TakeLessons platform to school and college students on skills such as digital marketing, web development, HR, communication skills, internships and jobs preparation.

Industry experts will

Checks and balances

While ed-tech offers remarkable benefits, its use requires a responsible approach to mitigate potential drawbacks



es the learning experience. A higher PICRAT score signifies a stronger rationale to integrate a specific ed-tech solution.

For instance, an ed-tech tool that encourages active student engagement through interactive simulations while simultaneously transforming the way complex scientific concepts are taught would receive a high PICRAT score. This allows educators to tailor their ed-tech choices to align with specific educational goals and pedagogical approaches.

Responsible Usage

While ed-tech offers remarkable benefits, its usage demands a responsible approach to mitigate potential drawbacks. It is essential to adopt healthy practices to ensure a balanced digital experience. Strategies such as limiting non-educational screen time, incorporating regular screen breaks, and employing ergonomic techniques can address concerns like eye strain and posture issues. This will allow us to fully leverage technology without compromising well-being.

Further, educators should provide guidance on digital citizenship and responsible online behaviour. Teaching students about online etiquette, privacy, and the critical evaluation of digital empower students to navigate the online world safely and responsibly, ensuring that technology remains a valuable tool for learning.

As education continues to evolve, the thoughtful embrace of technology will undoubtedly pave the way for a brighter future for both students and classrooms.

The writer is the Co-CEO and Director of Education and Research at The Acres Foundation

backed by third-party research published in reputable scholarly journals. If such research is absent, schools can initiate pilot studies resembling controlled experiments. By comparing student outcomes between groups using ed-tech and traditional methods, institutions can gain insights into the technology's benefits, challenges, and viability before implementing it on a larger scale.

Moreover, it's critical to involve educators, students, and parents in the evaluation process. Their feedback and experiences can provide valuable insights and the inclusion of multiple perspectives ensures a holistic understanding of how technology impacts teaching and learning.

The proposed PICRAT framework serves as a practical tool to evaluate technology's role in classrooms. This classifies student engagement with technology as passive, interactive, or creative, capturing the depth of interaction. Concurrently, it assesses technology's impact as a replacement, an amplification, or a transformation of traditional teaching practices. This dual classification empowers educators to gauge the extent to which technology enhances or revolutionises

education.

Economics) for the academic year 2024-25.

Deadline: June 30, 2024
Eligibility: A Bachelor's degree in the appropriate subject with a final overall result of at least First Class. IELTS score of 6.5 with no less than 6.0 in all components, a Pearson Test of English Academic score of 62 with no less than 59 in any element, or a TOEFL IBT score of 90 overall with a minimum of 24 in the writing component and a minimum of 21 in all other components.

<https://bitly.ws/38ac8>

Mark your route

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



OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

business, people and resources.

I'm in the final year of my B.Sc. Advanced Zoology and Biotechnology. Should I do an M.Sc. in this or opt for streams that have more scope? Also, what kind of additional certificate courses will improve my profile? Harreni

Dear Harreni,

Measure the pros and cons of staying in the same field. You will be able to build on existing knowledge and the transition to an M.Sc. programme will be easier. Career options include research, academia, or specific roles related to your field of study. Moving to a different stream can open diverse opportunities.

Identify your likes and dislikes and research your interests and career goals. Speak with professionals in those fields, and explore job prospects.

To improve your profile, consider certification courses in Data Science or Data Analytics, Bioinformatics, Biotechnology Certification, Environmental Science or Conservation, Lab Techniques and Research Methodology, Business or Project Management, Science Communication, or Science Writing. The choice must align with your goals and interests.

I am in the final year of my degree in pharmacy. Which specialisation should I consider for Master's? Should I go abroad? Avinash

Dear Avinash,

Your Master's specialisation and studying abroad are important decisions. It should be based on your career goals, financial situation, and personal preferences. Weigh the pros and cons, and make an informed choice. Your options include Pharmacology, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Clinical Pharmacy, Pharmaceutical Administration, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmaceutical Biotechnology, Hospital Pharmacy, or Industrial Pharmacy. Doing an MS abroad will provide international exposure, enhance your

perspectives, and provide networking opportunities. However, it will be expensive. So research and plan your budget. Read the fine print about admission criteria, requirements, and standardized tests. Check out scholarships and financial aid options. Get in touch with alumni and current students to understand their experiences before making the final call.

I finished B.Com. (Hons) last year and got a job. I am interested in pursuing an MBA (HR) and an M.A. English. But I don't want to quit my job, as I also have some visual impairment. Will pursuing an online degree from a recognised college help? I have also enrolled in coaching to prepare for the State PSC exams but the exhaustive syllabus is driving me away. Shiva

Dear Shiva,

You have a lot going on but a detailed plan, consistency, and support can help you achieve your goals. For an online MBA course and M.A. English courses, find reputed and recognised institutions that offer accredited programmes. For the State PSC exam, set a realistic schedule that allows you to balance your work, education, and exam preparation.

Utilise online resources and practice tests. Check with the universities you apply to for support for students with visual impairment. Ensure that your online study material is compatible with screen readers or other assistive technologies. Finally, share your educational goals with your company. They may offer some support or flexibility to help you manage your responsibilities.

Do not forget to look after yourself and prioritise self-care to manage stress and maintain a healthy life balance.

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

SAVE THE DATE

Admissions and new courses

The Design Village has opened applications for its Bachelor of Design (B. Des.) and Master of Design (M. Des.) programmes for the 2024-25 academic year.

Eligibility: For B.Des.: 50% aggregate marks in Class 12 or equivalent exam from any stream. For M.Des.: Minimum 50% aggregate in a UG course in a related field.

<https://bitly.ws/FoKm>

Vigan Online has begun enrolment for its new batch from December 24 for the academic year 2024-25. It offers MBA, MCA, BCA, and BBA programmes with electives such as Computer Science and IT, Data Science, Human Resource Management, Finance, Marketing, Finance and Human Resource Management and more.

<https://viganonline.com/>

The School of Management at IILM University, Greater Noida, has launched an MBA programme in Management Technology, with

specialised courses in AI for Managers, Fintech, Business Analytics, Strategic Management, Design Thinking, Product Management, and Managing People. **Eligibility:** Any STEM-based UG degree, with 50% marks overall. <https://bitly.ws/37Drz>

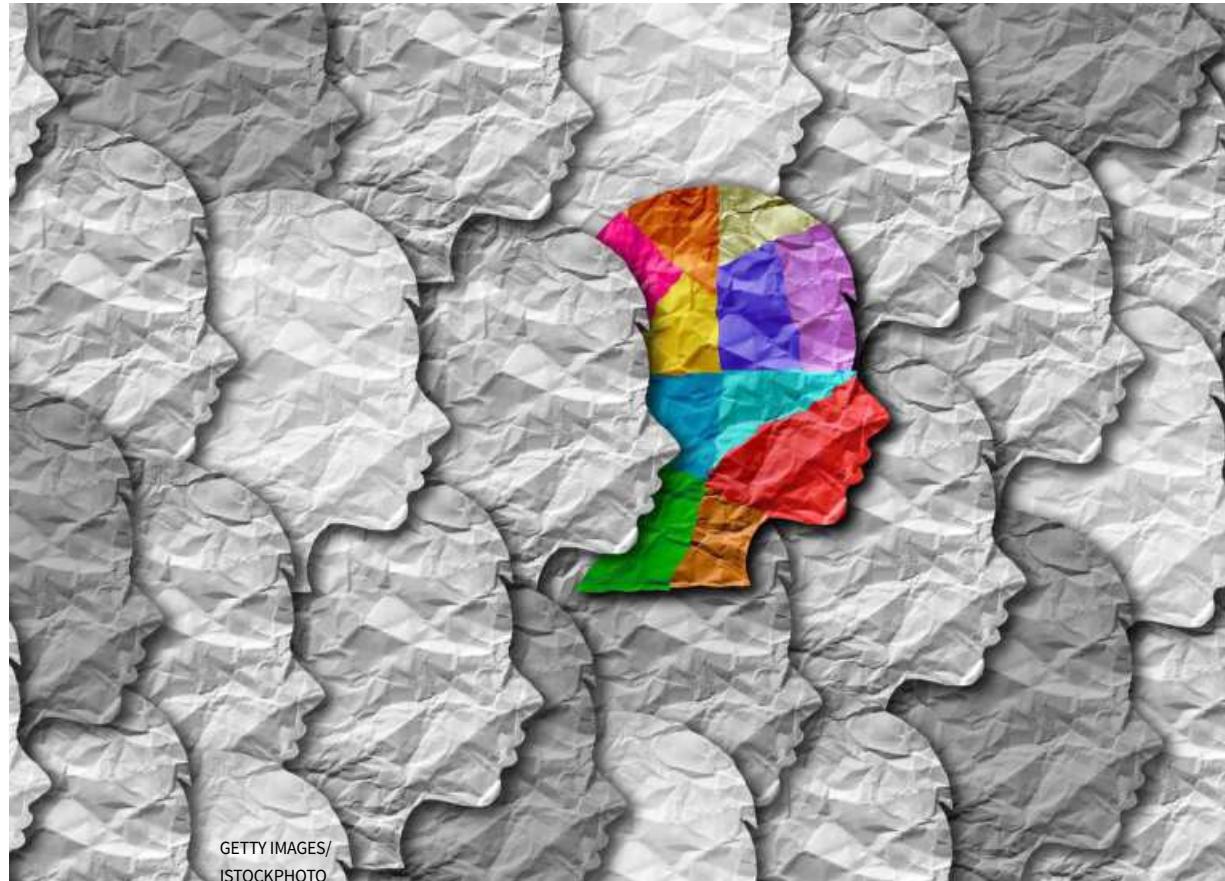
The University of Bath, the U.K., has opened applications for its postgraduate Economics courses (M.Sc. Economics and Finance, M.Sc. Applied Economics, M.Sc. Applied Economics with Banking and Financial Markets and M.Res.

Economics) for the academic year 2024-25. **Deadline:** June 30, 2024
Eligibility: A Bachelor's degree in the appropriate subject with a final overall result of at least First Class. IELTS score of 6.5 with no less than 6.0 in all components, a Pearson Test of English Academic score of 62 with no less than 59 in any element, or a TOEFL IBT score of 90 overall with a minimum of 24 in the writing component and a minimum of 21 in all other components.

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When you don't fit in

Neurotypical people should try to understand others' needs and provide safe, non-judgmental, and inclusive spaces for neurodiverse people to exhibit their authentic selves

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ISTOCKPHOTO

THINK

Aruna Sankaranarayanan

Most parents hope that their kids "fit in"; be it with a peer group or the larger community. This desire to be accepted extends into adulthood, so much so that we might say it's a fundamental human need. As every person is unique, we all have to make minor adjustments to our personalities and peculiarities, especially in social settings, so that we get along with others. But, as our social worlds generally operate according to norms set by neurotypical people, "fitting in" for neurodivergent people is both challenging and fraught.

In an article in *Psyche*, Jack Ori describes his difficulties in adjusting and getting by in a world fashioned by neurotypical norms and practices. Though highly intelligent, Ori, who is autistic, struggles with quotidian aspects of life, especially in the social sphere. Like many au-

tistic people, he found comfort in certain objects. He had a habit of carrying a bunch of pens and pencils tied together with a rubber band and would feel extremely discomfited if the band broke or was missing, making him an easy prey for bullies in high school. The world of work was also beset by obstacles. He underperformed not because of his incapacity to do a job but because of his unease with "small talk" and other social niceties. He was forced to change jobs often, even as he tried to fit in.

Ori, who was diagnosed formally only at 38, says that the diagnosis helped him understand his oddities and frustrations better. However, he did not wish to use his condition as an "excuse for failure". Having worked as a special education teacher, he had a ringside view of how parents of children with disabilities sometimes didn't correct misbehaviours that bothered others, using the condition as an excuse. According to Ori, even if a child was capable of altering certain annoying behaviours, at least to some degree, their parents didn't work towards it.

Likewise, Ori didn't identify with an autistic woman who didn't want to acquire social skills. Rather than changing herself, she wanted others to make modifications to deal with her poor social skills. But Ori recognised that the woman had a point. For neurodiverse people, it's often unclear where to draw the line between adapting versus submerging your identity. He confesses that many neurodivergent people engage in "masking", which entails concealing aspects of who you are in order to "fit in with your neurotypical peers". For example, do you endure "small talk" even if it leaves you exhausted? Do you dispense with fidgeting with rubber bands though you find the habit calming? Ori feels that there's no hard-and-fast rule.

In his bestselling book, *Far from the Tree*, writer Andrew Solomon unpacks the complexities of neurodiversity. "Many conditions are both illness and identity," writes Solomon, "but we can see one only when we obscure the other." However, such binary thinking is limiting and reductive. Like Ori, we need to alter our lenses so that

we appreciate both the challenges and the richness that neurodiversity engenders. In Solomon's book, *Temple Grandin*, the writer who has autism, avers that we should help neurodiverse people attain skills they're capable of. However, this should not be at the cost of neglecting their strengths. She sagely reminds us that genius and giftedness also constitute neurodiversity.

So, while neurodivergent people may be open to adapting when it doesn't cause inconvenience or harm to them, the onus shouldn't be entirely on them. As Emily Reynolds writes in a blog post of the British Psychological Society, neurotypical people need to acknowledge that diverse communication styles exist and that neurotypical norms are not necessarily the "default" for everyone. Further, neurotypical people may also try to understand the needs of others and provide safe, non-judgmental, and inclusive spaces for neurodiverse people to exhibit their authentic selves.

The writer is the author of *Zero Limits: Things Every 20-Something Should Know & blogs at www.arunasankaranarayanan.com*

Fashion forward



The next generation of fast fashion professionals must possess a comprehensive skill set that combines technological finesse with creativity and ingenuity.

Ilesh Ghevariya

In the realm of fast fashion, where trends change at the blink of an eye and consumer expectations evolve just as swiftly, the integration of technology is reshaping the industry's very fabric. Here are some areas in which technology is making a difference:

AI-driven trend analysis: Fast fashion's future belongs to those who master AI technologies such as Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing to delve into colossal datasets encompassing everything from social media interactions to runway trends and dissecting intricate patterns of consumer behaviour. For instance, AI can be used to analyse search and purchase data from millions of shoppers, predict upcoming trends and provide crucial insights to designers.

Personalised shopping: By analysing data about purchase history, browsing behaviour, and more, personalised shopping experiences can be created leading to increase in sales and customer satisfaction.

Supply-chain optimisation: Proficiency in data analytics allows informed decisions on inventory management by analysing historical sales data and market trends. Thus, AI can be used to optimise the supply chain, minimise excess inventory and reduce costs while ensuring pro-

ducts are available when and where customers want them.

Sustainable practices: Technology helps research innovative fabrics like recycled materials and organic fibres, track materials from source to disposal using tools like blockchain, 3D virtual sampling reduces waste by visualising designs digitally. Sustainability extends to manufacturing, where automation and smart techniques minimise energy use and carbon emissions. AI algorithms enhance demand prediction, reducing overproduction and waste. A

Communication skills: Having both technical know-how and great communication is vital to technology experts with the creative team, helping them understand each other and explain complicated ideas like AI-driven designs in a way that everyone can understand.

Entrepreneurial mindset: An entrepreneurial spirit fuels innovation in fast fashion. Those who embrace this mindset identify gaps and leverage technology to disrupt the norm. They help brands launch limited-edition collections with sustainable fabrics or utilise 3D printing for custom accessories, demonstrating how tech-driven innovation can redefine the market.

The next generation of fast fashion professionals must possess a comprehensive skill set that combines technological finesse with creative ingenuity. As technology continues to evolve, those who navigate this fusion will lead the charge, redefining the fast fashion landscape while simultaneously setting new standards for innovation and sustainability.

E-commerce roles: With a comprehensive understanding of user experience design and SEO strategies, online platforms can captivate audiences. The implementation of AI-powered chatbots ensures real-time customer support.

The writer is the Founder and CEO of French Crown.

Industry awareness: Staying ahead requires active involvement in industry forums, webinars, and continuous learning. RFID technology ensures accurate inventory tracking and adopt AI-driven demand forecasting tools.

Party workers: The training of political workers plays a pivotal role in shaping the course of a na-

A career in politics comes with the opportunity to create an impact and build a network at the highest level.

Abhimanyu Bharti

In this era of information and communication, the political skills and behavioural knowledge required for a career in politics remain within a closed group of people. This leads to an uneven playing field for those who hail from a non-political background. A major reason for this is the lack of a structured mechanism for political education and training at various levels.

Common citizens: To make informed decisions at the polling booth, citizens must possess a comprehensive understanding of the political decisions made at the local, state, and national levels as it impacts the lives of millions.

Professionals in politics: In the era of new age media, data and technology professionals – from campaign strategists and policy advisors to communication experts and data analysts – act as the support system.

Party workers: The training of political workers plays a pivotal role in shaping the course of a na-

tion's democratic journey. Proper training ensures that political workers can maximise their outreach and influence.

Politicians: People coming from non-political backgrounds face steep challenges in their journey. Political training and education gives them the framework and direction to take key decisions and helps them build their skills to excel as politicians.

Political education is an upcoming domain in India. The following courses and programmes focus on political training and strategy.

Nistha Tripathi

In an era where technological developments are revolutionising industries at an unprecedented pace, automation is transforming industries and changing how we work. However, by adopting a proactive approach and refining a unique skill-set, students can remain relevant in the ever-evolving job market. For someone who is considering studying abroad, pursuing courses that are unaffected by automation and also align with emerging trends is crucial to achieving success.

While routine and repetitive jobs such as manufacturing, data entry, customer service, and so on, are particularly vulnerable to the AI threat, there are jobs requiring creative expression, complex problem solving, and meaningful human interactions that promise security and personal fulfilment. Here are some advantages for such career paths:

Job security: Walking the paths that Artificial Intelligence has not affected can be viable in the long term. Skills such as adaptability, artistic expression,

originality, and so on, are less susceptible to replacement and can ensure employability.

Job satisfaction: Jobs that are less likely to be automated also provide greater engagement, variety, and challenge, fostering a sense of accomplishment and purpose. This also enhances overall quality of life.

Learning and growth: AI currently lacks the ability to think creatively and develop new ideas or innova-

tions entirely on its own. Ideas are driven by unconventional thinking and imagination. Hence, one must be a constant learner to fight against automation.

Here are some career opportunities that are hard to automate and that students should consider:

Healthcare: The medical profession involves critical decision-making, physical actions and personal care to patients. While technology can be an aid, patient assessment and treatment often requires

human expertise and compassion, which cannot be replicated by AI.

Psychological help: Counselling thrives on human interaction, emotional intelligence, and personal connection. Understanding and interpreting human emotions, including empathy and social dynamics, are tasks that AI struggles with.

Law: Making judgement calls, especially in complex situations involving ethical dilemmas, requires a deep understanding of moral

and ethical values and the ability to weigh and assess different perspectives. AI lacks subjective reasoning and moral principles that a typical human possesses, thus making automation in such areas almost unimaginable.

Teachers: While there has been some use of AI in teaching, a teacher's role goes beyond sharing knowledge. A teacher is crucial in offering each student support by supporting individual learning process. The connection and personalisation that human educators provide cannot be replaced by AI.

Social work: Though AI can process huge amounts of data and information, it cannot empathise with people. Social workers have to maintain a human-centric approach and build human bonds.

The future belongs to those who can integrate knowledge with passion. Stay curious, invest in constant learning, and align your journey with your heart's calling. This will enable you to thrive in an era of AI.

The writer is Founder and Director, 24NorthStar.

Decoding the democracy

ten subjects on political campaigns and electoral strategy.

The Art of Political Success

A two-month course with 12 modules that focuses on the skills needed to be successful politicians.

The Good Politician

A nine-month experiential programme that invites 30 emerging grassroots leaders to embark on a political journey.

Election Campaign Management

A six-month UGC-approved programme under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it is divided into eight modules delivered through a series of physical lectures, workshops and projects.

She Represents

A seven-day leadership programme for elected women representatives selected from across India.

Certification courses

Political Campaigns and Electoral Strategy: A 100-hour course, it contains

Postgraduate courses

Leadership, Politics and Governance

A nine-month residential course, it focuses on Leadership and Management, Politics and Democracy, Governance and Public Policy.

Political Leadership and Government

A two-year programme that covers election internship, constituency internship, issue-based internship and political internship

Qualities

A career in politics involves passion and hunger to succeed. A few skills needed to be successful are:

Patience and perseverance

Politics has no shortcuts. Waiting for the right time and timing one's leap is the biggest factor.

Personal connections

Nothing supersedes personal connections when it comes to politics. A strong and well-maintained bond leads to greater growth.

Understanding society

Politics requires an in-depth understanding of society and the electorate.

Self-branding

Making oneself visible to the society and community by using media, social media and new age media makes one stand out in the crowd.

Career opportunities

Apart from a position as a politician, one can aspire to become executive assistants to leaders, political consultants and analysts, subject matter experts like psephologist, media managers, digital political communication experts and starting a political service agency.

All these give one the opportunity to create an impact and network at the highest level.

The writer is the Co-Founder of School Of Politics.



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