

EDUCATION PLUS

GET THE EDGE

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There has been some bad news for the Humanities. A year ago, the University of Kent, the U.K., confirmed that it would phase out Art History, Anthropology, Health and Social Care, Journalism, Music and Audio Technology, and Philosophy and Religious Studies. Citing financial reasons, Canterbury Christ Church University in Kent announced in November 2024 that it would stop offering English Literature programmes from September 2025. Cardiff University does not want to continue with the Ancient Language modules due to a huge financial deficit. Goldsmiths, University of London, has also decided to scrap a few Arts and Humanities modules. In India too, certain Arts departments are not secure about their future and some Humanities programmes have already been staggered.

During the Renaissance, the focus in educational institutions was on *studia humanitatis* or "studies of humanity," especially Greek and Latin classics, Grammar and Rhetoric and Languages, Literature, Philosophy and History. The Humanities refer to those academic disciplines that focus on human beings and rely on hermeneutics or theories of interpretation as their predominant methodology. They differ from Pure Sciences because of their content and pedagogy. Subjects like

Physics and Chemistry focus on matter and depend on laboratory experiments for their data. Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology deal with human beings but their insistence on positivistic and empirical methodology differentiates them from the Humanities and categorises them as Social Sciences.

Why are the Humanities being side-lined? We need to realise that the neglect of the Humanities is not a recent phenomenon, for as early as the 19th century, German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey classified all academic disciplines into two groups: the Human Sciences and the Natural Sciences. What is appalling is that even the Humanities were forcibly brought under the sciences. Dilthey went a step further and proclaimed that, to survive, the Humanities should adopt the empirical methodological.

Challenges
What are the problems that plague the Humanities departments? First, it is a fact that there are not many takers for certain Arts programmes. In India, very few applications are received for programmes like History and Philosophy, making them financially unviable. In the West too, not many students are enthusiastic about the Humanities. Second, in the job market all over the world, STEM stu-

Whither Humanities?

Without ethics, aesthetics and hermeneutics that constitute the soul of the Humanities, the world will not be an ideal place for human beings.

dents pocket most of the placements. Humanities students are increasingly ignored by recruiting companies.

Third, Sciences depend on laboratory experiments and deal with facts, and believe that truth is singular.

But the Humanities, especially from a postmodern perspective that has called for an "incredulity towards metanarratives", speak of truths in the plural. This has unnerved not only the hard sciences but also the Social Sciences that rely

predominantly on quantitative data.

Fourth, there is sometimes a feeling that Humanities students are not quite as diligent and hard-working as their Science counterparts who spend long hours in their labs. Put differently, poetry, novels and films are considered subjects that do not rigorous classroom teaching. Last and most important, today's digital world is heavily data-based and everything is worked out in terms of numbers, percentages and ratios. Such a world has deepened the divide between the Sciences and the Humanities.

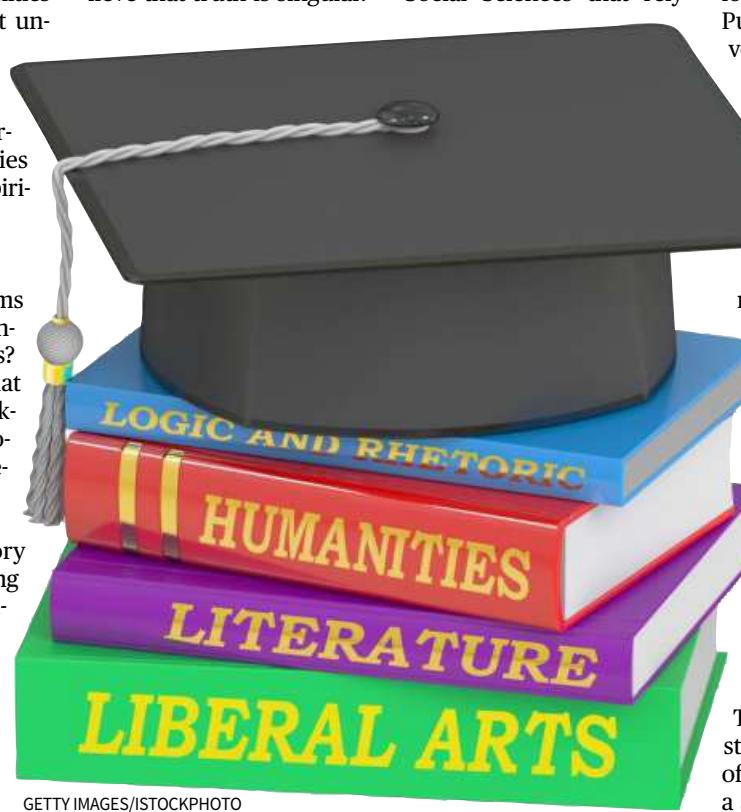
Pressing need

The world certainly needs the Humanities, which talk about transcendence while the Sciences are confined to immanence. This is one of its strengths. Second, a study of the Humanities ingrains a sense of empathy, which

is vital to the survival of the humankind. Aristotle talked about pity and terror and the resultant *catharsis*. Only because the learners are empathetic to the tragic protagonists do they experience pity and fear. Third, the Humanities help enhance the learners' emotional intelligence. Fourth, the Humanities promote hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation. The Social Sciences – and Pure Sciences too to some extent – need hermeneutics to interpret data, both quantitative and qualitative. Finally, the Humanities teach us to look at the world aesthetically and appreciate even "the meanest flower that blows".

C.P. Snow in his Rede Lecture (1959) remarked that "the intellectual life of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups ... literary intellectuals at one pole – and at the other scientists" ("Two Cultures"). Ultimately, there should be a rapprochement between the two and we should strive to bridge the gap, making the Humanities incrementally scientific/systematic as in the case of Digital Humanities, and the Sciences more humanistic, especially in terms of methodology. Without ethics, aesthetics and hermeneutics that constitute the soul of the Humanities, the world will not be an ideal place for human beings.

The writer is Emeritus Professor, Gandhigram Rural Institute Deemed-to-be University



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SCHOLARSHIPS**GTRE Bengaluru Graduate, Diploma and ITI Apprenticeship Training**

Provided by the Gas Turbine Research Establishment.

Eligibility: Open to those between 18 and 27 years as of May, 8 2025, who hold a UG degree, diploma or vocational degree in specific disciplines from a recognised institution.

Rewards: Up to ₹9,000 per month

Application: Online
Deadline: May 8
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Sports Global Excellence Scholarship

Offered by the University of Gloucestershire, the U.K.

Eligibility: Open to international, self-funded, fee-paying students pursuing a full-time UG, PG or postgraduate taught

degree on campus who can perform at the required level in the sport.

Rewards: Up to £7,500 waiver on tuition fees.

Application: Online

Deadline: May 18
www.b4s.in/edge/SGEI

University of St Andrews GREAT Scholarship

A joint initiative of the

British Council and the University of St Andrews, the U.K.

Eligibility: Open to Indian citizens who have applied for a postgraduate taught Master's programme at the university, meet the English language requirement or have started a 10-week pre-session English course by June 30, 2025.

Rewards: £10,000

Application: Online
Deadline: May 25
www.b4s.in/edge/GUA1

Courtesy: buddy4study

Changemakers World Cup

One Million for One Billion (1M1B) has launched the Changemakers World Cup to identify and spotlight 50 of India's most impactful changemakers. The competition has two tracks Young Changemakers for those under 18 years and Professionals for those aged 18 years and above.

Participants can choose from the Act for Change, Speak for Change, and Art for Change categories.

Participants have to complete tasks, earn points, and climb the leaderboard to unlock certificates, and a spot at the global summit.

Deadline: May 31
For details, visit
<https://tinyurl.com/2uutv8kk>

Broaden your perspective



OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman
I am 26. I have completed D.Ed. Elementary teacher Education, B.A. and am now in the final year of LLB. I appeared for the DSC exam for government school jobs in 2024 but didn't pass. I am confused about whether to go abroad for LLM, prepare for this year's DSC exam or explore opportunities in the legal sector. Raju

Dear Raju,
Reflect on your priorities and long-term goals. Your choice will depend on the career path that aligns with your passion and values. What do you enjoy: teaching or law? Also, take into account your risk tolerance, financial situation, and the time you are willing to invest in developing each of these potential career paths?

The DSC exam offers a more immediate path. If you are considering this, create a structured study plan and focus on your weak areas. Securing a government school job will provide stability and security, and your D.Ed. and B.A. qualifications will align with this.

If you are interested in the legal sector, network with lawyers and explore internship opportunities and shortlist research universities and scholarship options for the LLM. Look into the job markets of the countries that you are interested in. An LLM from a foreign university can enhance your expertise, and international exposure will broaden your perspectives and open doors to diverse

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

areas of law, such as litigation, corporate law, or legal consulting.

My son is in the first-year B. Tech. AI-ML. What are the prospects for MS in the U.S. or Civil Services in India? What are his other options? Chandrasekhar

Dear Chandrasekhar,
AI-ML is highly sought after in American universities and industries. An MS from a reputable U.S. university can open doors to jobs in companies such as Google, Amazon, Microsoft and so on, research positions in academia or industry and opportunities to work on cutting-edge projects.

But also consider this interests encourage him to pursue what he enjoys and loves. He must follow a path that aligns with his passions and long-term plans.

While his B.Tech. is in a technical field, it doesn't preclude him from the Civil Services where his analytical and problem-solving skills can be a valuable asset.

However, he will need to dedicate significant time to preparing for the UPSC exam.

Some other options include direct industry roles such as Machine Learning Engineer, Data Scientist, AI Research Scientist, or AI Software Developer. Is he interested in entrepreneurship? He can also consider further specialisations in AI-ML if he is interested in research and academia, or an MBA with focus on technology management and leadership.

I am in Class 12 (Science). I am interested in Physics, Earth Science and Law. What are the prospects in these three areas and which are the premier institutes? Remesh

Dear Remesh,
Prospects in Physics lie across research, technology, education, aerospace, energy, and telecommunications. Earth Science will give you opportunities across geology, environmental science, meteorology, oceanography and disaster management.

Some premier institutes for Earth Science and Astronomy are the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru; the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) located in various cities; Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru; Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital; and National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NCESS), Thiruvananthapuram.

Law has potential across litigation, corporate law, civil law, IP law and others. Reputed institutions include

National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru; National Law University, Delhi (NLU Delhi); NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad; Faculty of Law, University of Delhi; and Symbiosis Law School, Pune.

You will have to research each institute for the criteria for admission, entrance exam dates and syllabus.

While making your decision, consider which field aligns best with your

interests, strengths and passion.

I am in the last semester of B.A. Psychology. I'm interested in a Master's in Organisational Psychology. Is this course available in India? Also, what are my prospects after this course? Shruti

Dear Shruti,
A Master's in Organisational Psychology (also referred to as Industrial-Organisational Psychology) is available in India in institutions such as Amity University, Christ University, University of Delhi, and Bharathiar University. However, check the websites for more information as course offerings may change. MBA programmes with specialisations in Organisational Psychology are also available but the focus here is on the business application of this field. When researching programmes, pay close attention to the curriculum and faculty expertise to ensure they align with your career goals.

A Master's in Organisational Psychology opens up a range of opportunities in various sectors such as human resources (HR), consulting, organisational development, market research, training and development and academia and research.

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.

Anbu Rathinavel

In an era where Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality dominate classrooms, educational institutions expend enormous energy trying to keep pace with technological changes, yet risk making little real progress. Their reactive stance to each new innovation leaves many trapped in a perpetual time warp, with curricula growing increasingly irrelevant. While there's no perfect solution - as many factors lie beyond institutional control and even tech experts struggle to predict future developments - Design Thinking can be a transformative framework.

Design Thinking is a problem-solving approach, which emphasises adaptability and creative solutions, may be a chance to break free of the technology treadmill and prepare students for an unpredictable digital future.

However, the true power of Design Thinking lies not in its methodologies but in its potential to fundamentally reshape how students think and approach problems.

The process of designing the thinking requires moving beyond the mechanical application of design tools to creating learning environments that empower students to challenge existing boundaries and explore unconventional possibilities. The focus shifts from merely teaching problem-solving to cultivating cognitive flexibility and enabling students to think critically, empathise deeply, and approach problems with creativity and adaptability.

The journey to effective problem-solving begins by dismantling a pervasive barrier:

the 'I have a brilliant idea that will change the world' mindset. This self-centred view, common among students and encouraged by traditional education's focus on individual achievement, often dooms solutions to failure. The crucial shift lies in cultivating empathy: the ability to understand the user's perspective that will transform student thinking.

Even more crucial is nurturing the ability to question assumptions, which is the cornerstone of scientific progress and innovation. Designing the Thinking necessitates creating learning environments that empower students to challenge existing boundaries and explore unconventional possibilities.

The process of designing the thinking requires moving beyond the mechanical application of design tools to creating learning environments that empower students to challenge existing boundaries and explore unconventional possibilities. The focus shifts from merely teaching problem-solving to cultivating cognitive flexibility and enabling students to think critically, empathise deeply, and approach problems with creativity and adaptability.

The power of this approach lies in its ability to transform students from passive recipients of knowledge into active creators of understanding. When students learn to think like designers, they develop not

just problem-solving skills, but problem-finding abilities. They learn to question not just how to solve a problem, but whether they're solving the right problem at all.

Evaluation

This shift from tool-focused to mindset-focused education requires fundamental changes in how we teach and assess learning. Instead of measuring success through traditional metrics, we need to evaluate students' ability to:

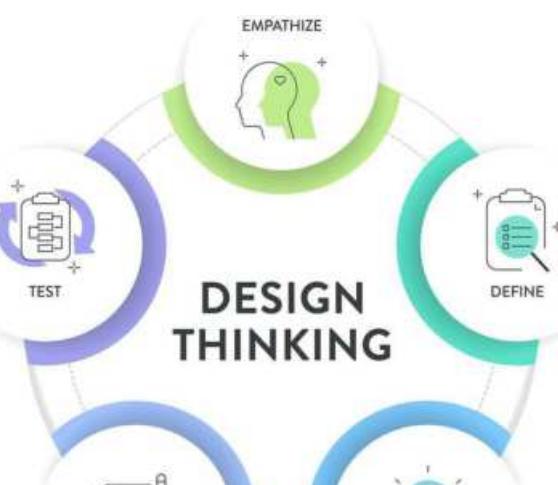
- Question assumptions and challenge conventional wisdom
- Empathise with diverse perspectives and needs
- Generate multiple possible solutions rather than seeking single "right" answers
- Prototype and iterate on ideas
- Learn from failure and adapt approaches accordingly

The ultimate goal is to develop individuals who are purpose-driven and capable of making meaningful contributions to society. This means moving beyond the treadmill of constantly updating technical skills to cultivating minds that can anticipate and adapt to change.

As we look to the future, the success of education will increasingly depend not on how well we can keep pace with technological change but on how effectively we can develop students' capacity for innovative thinking. By focusing on designing thinking, we can prepare students not just for the jobs of tomorrow, but for creating the innovations that will shape that tomorrow.

The journey from today's student to tomorrow's effective leader begins with an open mind that fearlessly explores new possibilities, and maintains a comprehensive perspective. This isn't just crucial for future success; it's essential for leading us toward a better tomorrow.

The writer is Partner-Chief Design Officer, Intellect Design Arena, and Head of School of Design Thinking.



Designing minds

Design Thinking's true power lies not in its methodologies but in its potential to fundamentally reshape how students think and approach problems.

to embrace ambiguity. Unlike traditional education, real-world challenges are messy and ill-defined. Students need to develop comfort with uncertainty and the ability to navigate complex, unclear situations.

Second, they must cultivate curiosity and observational skills. This goes beyond simple data gathering to develop deep empathy and understanding of human needs and experiences.

This teaches students to see beyond surface-level problems to understand underlying patterns and relationships.

Third, students need to develop integrative thinking or the ability to see connections across seemingly unrelated domains. This enables them to synthesise diverse information by connecting the dots and generate innovative solutions.

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Crucial shift

The journey to effective problem-solving begins by dismantling a pervasive barrier:

First, students must learn

the 'I have a brilliant idea that will change the world' mindset. This self-centred view, common among students and encouraged by traditional education's focus on individual achievement, often dooms solutions to failure. The crucial shift lies in cultivating empathy: the ability to understand the user's perspective that will transform student thinking.

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WIDE ANGLE
Albert P' Rayan

I often hear educators, teachers, and parents lament that many students no longer read beyond their prescribed textbooks.

Technology is frequently blamed for the decline of this once-popular habit and some even claim that reading as a hobby is on the verge of extinction. But is this a shocking reality or merely an exaggerated concern from those out of touch with the power of the digital world?

While the situation may seem bleak, many committed educators continue to nurture a love of reading among both young students and adults. Whenever I visit bookstores or book fairs, I see children eagerly talking about books and picking titles that capture their interest. I often strike up conversations to learn why they read, what they enjoy, and how they developed the habit.

After all, every child loves listening to and telling stories. If children are so instinctively drawn to

stories, shouldn't that enthusiasm naturally extend to books, one of the richest sources of stories? If children aren't drawn to books, who is responsible? Parents, teachers, both, or perhaps the education system?

Curiosity factor

Although fewer people read for pleasure today, I believe – based on my observations and interactions – that reading as a hobby will never die. As human beings, we are naturally curious, and that curiosity draws us to books. As long as we seek to explore and understand the world, the appeal of reading will endure. That said, it remains essential for educators to actively nurture and promote reading among students.

Children learn from their parents, teachers, and elders. If properly encouraged, they can easily take up reading as a hobby and reap immense mental, emotional, social, and educational benefits. Studies have shown that reading improves brain function, enhances concentration, and stimulates imagination and creativity. It is also an excellent way to relax and relieve stress. Those who enjoy fiction can see the world through the eyes of



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different characters helping them understand others better and develop empathy.

Moreover, reading is a powerful tool to acquire knowledge, sharpen analytical and critical thinking skills, and improve language and communication abilities. It also has lasting benefits: it keeps curiosity alive and can help individuals find deeper meaning in life.

Inspiration to read

Certain events and the activities of individuals can inspire young minds to take up reading as a hobby. World Books and Copyright Day, celebrated annually on April 23 across the globe, is one such event. Although observed

on the first Thursday of March in countries like the U.K. and Ireland, it aims to promote reading and encourage people to explore books of their choice.

The theme for 2025 is "Read Your Way." Everyone is unique, and each person's tastes differ. Likewise, reading habits, styles, and preferences vary ... there is no single way

to read. The theme acknowledges these individual differences and rightly emphasises that reading is a personal experience and encourages readers to embrace reading in a way that aligns with their own interests and preferences. It doesn't matter whether someone prefers physical books or e-books, fiction or non-fiction, traditional

The next in the monthly series by WWF-India that highlights niche and unconventional green careers through the stories of well-known personalities from the field of environment and conservation

For most of my early career, I was an engineer working in the corporate world, managing deadlines and weekend escapades. However, I also nurtured two quiet passions: art and birding. I spent most of my weekends with sketchbooks and binoculars. Over time, the pull of Nature grew stronger. I finally decided to give wildlife illustration a full-time shot and undertook a certification in Graphic Design.

Making the switch from the corporate sector to designing was both exciting and terrifying. I had no connections in the wildlife or illustration community. But social media became my launchpad. Instagram and Facebook allowed me to showcase my work, connect with like-minded people, and slowly build a network. All my early projects came through these platforms. It's been over eight years now, and today, most of my work comes through word of mouth. I have worked in collaboration with organisations like WWF-India, TRAFFIC, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), and several state forest departments.

In my role, no two days are the same. Some days, I'm in my studio, painting



GREEN CAREERS HUB

Inking impact

Wildlife artist and illustrator Richa Kedia on how Nature teaches you to slow down, watch closely, and learn constantly.

illustrations for projects. On others, I'm deep in the field, observing birds and plants, sketching on the go. I try to keep at least one day a week for the outdoors. That's where I feel most alive, and also gather fresh perspectives

and references for my art. With my work, I get to explore forests and paint what I see.

The best part? Every field trip brings new stories. I often work with forest departments



career evolves with every project and trip. I want to spend more time in the field, studying and sketching not just birds, but also plants, insects, and other wildlife. Each habitat teaches me something new, and I want to reflect that richness in my illustrations.

To succeed in this field, painting and graphic design skills are essential, of course. But knowledge of natural history and conservation – something I've built over years of fieldwork – helps me bring authenticity to my work. Other equally important skills are keen observation, curiosity, and patience. Nature teaches you to slow down, watch closely, and learn constantly. Art, like Nature, is a lifelong practice.

Rohan Chakravarty, the creator of Green Humour, was one of the first people who made me believe that a career in conservation art is possible. I also admire the work of artists like Meena Subramanian, Sartaj Ghuman, Robert Bateman, John Muir Laws, and John James Audubon.

To students and young professionals, here's my advice: "Rome wasn't built in a day." Success doesn't come overnight. Keep refining your skills and stay true to your passion. In conservation, success doesn't always mean wealth; it's about impact. If your work inspires action and helps preserve the planet, that's worth striving for.

**Jagatheeswari R.
Velumani K.**

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a client-centred health profession focused on promoting health and well-being through meaningful activities, referred to as 'occupations', which include tasks related to self-care, work, leisure, and community participation. OT addresses physical, mental, developmental, or emotional challenges stemming from disabilities, injuries, illnesses, or age-related conditions. The ultimate goal is to help individuals of any age develop, regain, or maintain skills that give them independent and fulfilling lives.

Education and skills

To begin with, complete Class 12 with Physics, Chemistry, and Biology and follow it with a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (BOT). This involves 4.5 years of classroom learning and six months of mandatory internship. Advanced specialisations include Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) or doctoral studies, apart from specialised certifications in areas such as sensory integration therapy, hand therapy, or neurodevelopmental techniques.

Beyond technical expertise, occupational therapists require a diverse set of skills that encompass functional and emotional intelligence. Strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential, as OTs work closely with patients, their families, and multidisciplinary teams.

words: "A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never-failing spring in the desert."

How wonderful it would be if philanthropists in India took similar initiatives to build public libraries in the country! There are many ways policymakers, philanthropists, educators and others interested in education can help promote reading among people. Schools, too, should make their libraries more accessible to both teachers and students, encouraging regular visits and allowing them to freely choose books that interest them.

"Read Your Way" is particularly significant because it celebrates individual freedom/choice and emphasises that reading is not just an act of consumption, but one of connection.

On this occasion, it is fitting to remember a great philanthropist who believed that building public libraries and fostering a reading-friendly environment were among the most effective ways to promote reading. Known as the "Patron Saint of Libraries", Andrew Carnegie established hundreds of public libraries, making books accessible to millions and significantly advancing the public library movement in the U.S. Between 1881 and 1929, Carnegie – and later his foundation – is said to have donated approximately \$56 million to build 2,509 public libraries across several countries. In his own

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Restoring hope and dignity

The scope of Occupational Therapy is expanding in India due to increased awareness of rehabilitation and wellness services.

achievement. Occupational therapy provides a continuous learning experience, as every patient brings a new challenge, encouraging therapists to think critically, refine their techniques, and grow personally and professionally. The diversity of cases and settings ensures that OTs remain engaged and motivated. Further, the collaborative nature of the job – working alongside doctors, educators, psychologists, and social workers – fosters a strong professional support system. Beyond clinical practice, OT allows professionals to advocate for inclusivity and accessibility in various spheres, including education, workplace accommodations, and public infrastructure and to contribute to a more equitable society.

The scope of occupational therapy is expanding in India due to increased awareness of rehabilitation and wellness services. Therapists can specialise in paediatrics, geriatrics, or hand therapy, transition into leadership roles, or pursue opportunities in research and academia. Entrepreneurship in private practice or consultancy services, such as ergonomic assessments, is another promising avenue.

At its core, OT is about unlocking potential and empowering individuals to lead meaningful lives. It is not just about physical rehabilitation; it is about restoring hope, dignity, and a sense of purpose.

The writers are occupational therapists at The Association of People with Disability.

Career growth
In India, occupational therapists must register with the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) and the All India Occupational Therapists' Association (AIOTA). OT provides therapists with the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to individuals' lives, as they regain independence and confidence. The role demands resilience and patience, but the breakthroughs offer a profound sense of



Gaurav Mittal

Students today have access to endless career opportunities, many of which are unique, lucrative, and rewarding. Information about global job markets and skill development programmes are readily available online. Additionally, leading educational institutions offer Summer Camps providing hands-on exposure, internships, and development programmes, helping students make informed career decisions.

Self-assessment

But to choose a career path, it is essential to conduct a self-assessment and identify skills in areas such as technical expertise, creativity, communication, problem-solving, or leader-

On the right track?

Students today have unparalleled access to resources for informed career decisions and should make full use of these



FREEPIK

ship. To ensure they are on the right track, students can seek professional guidance from career counselors and online skill assessment tests to map abilities to career requirements. With the job market constantly shifting, staying informed about trends is crucial

student pursuing Computer Engineering without evolving toward AI may struggle to get a job.

Another aspect is networking with professionals to stay updated on current trends. While passion is a crucial factor in career success, it is equally important to know and understand the work environment for long-term job satisfaction. If a student passionate about Mechanical Engineering gets a job in automotive manufacturing but dislikes the shop-floor work, they may feel dissatisfied.

Students with an entrepreneurial mindset must acquire business-related skills alongside traditional education and develop expertise in areas like social media marketing, financial management, and leader-

The writer is Founder and MD, ITCONS e-Solutions Ltd.