

EDUCATION PLUS

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A. Joseph Dorairaj

Curriculum revision is a welcome phenomenon. Both universities and colleges must revise and, if necessary, restructure their curriculum every two or three years. It is essential to keep abreast of the latest trends and challenges in every domain so that academic programmes and courses do not become obsolete. But a few questions need to be answered. How often should the curriculum be revised? Should the revision be peripheral or substantial? Who decides what and how much should be revised? And with what rationale?

Not all questions are equally important. But the one about decision-makers warrants attention. In higher education institutes (HEIs), curriculum design and revision is initiated and overseen by individual departments and the institution's Academic Council at a higher level. The presence of external subject experts, an alumnus, and an 'industry' representative in the Board of Studies, which frames and revisits the curriculum periodically, is mandated in almost all institutions. External subject experts ensure that the curriculum is updated and is on a par with the best in the field. The alumnus gives feedback in terms of what is good and what needs to be revised. Industry representatives comment on whether the cur-

A pragmatic mix

While inputs from the industry are necessary, curriculum revision in higher education should look beyond making students job-ready



they are willing to accommodate suggestions to ensure the graduates are certified job-ready, curriculum cannot be designed and restructured solely on the basis of market demand and prospects of employment.

If technocrats are allowed to have the last word on the design and restructuring of curriculum, what would be the ramifications? One is the cold shoulder of the Humanities and Liberal Studies. If all our programmes and courses are aligned with market needs, placement would certainly improve. Institutions can boast of placement records and this will certainly enhance the demand and institutions will go up a few notches in terms of accreditation.

Beyond jobs
But higher education has another important mandate: to transform students into better human beings who will be empowered and responsible citizens. Therefore, it needs to be ensured that curriculum restructuring is not hijacked by non-academics.

Recently in a meeting of the Board of Studies in English, which was convened to restructure the curriculum for M.A. English Studies, a technocrat wanted the programme to be re-oriented to include skill-based courses like Journalism, Advertisements, Visual Communication, Translation, and Theatre Arts and demanded that conventional courses like

Shakespeare, Linguistics and Phonetics, and Comparative Literature be replaced with employment-oriented courses. A similar scene played out in the department of History where the 'industry' representative replaced almost half the traditional courses with those related to tourism and hospitality with the argument that students should be made job ready.

The situation will, of course, be different in Engineering and Technology, which have to constantly reinvent themselves to stay relevant and help their graduates land secure jobs. Even there, the basics should not be forgotten and a dose of liberal education should be injected into the curriculum.

While inputs from the industry and market should be taken into consideration during curriculum design and restructuring, both educationists and technocrats should not focus only on jobs and salaries. Higher education should empower students with critical thinking skills and a strong emotional, digital and ecological quotient. In the pursuit of gainful employment, liberal education should not be sidelined. Ultimately, what we need is a holistic education, which will ensure a healthy and pragmatic mix of information, knowledge, and skills.

The writer is Professor, School of English and Foreign Languages, Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed-to-be University), Gandhigram. Email: josephdorairaj@gmail.com

International Education Fair

The 20th edition of International Education Fair (IEF) organised by The Hindu Education Plus will be held from August 15 to August 30 across seven cities. This one-stop platform will bring delegates from consultates, top international universities, colleges, consultants and financial institutions to give comprehensive information on overseas education.

Students can interact with experts from global consultants and colleges and attend seminars and sessions on visa counselling and financial aid services.

When and Where:

August 15 at Taj Vivanta, Hyderabad; August 17 at Taj Vivanta, Vijayawada; August 19 at Christ University Central Campus, Bengaluru; August 20 at Christ University Kengeri Campus, Bengaluru; August 22 at Taj



Vivanta, Coimbatore; August 23 at Kumaraguru College of Technology, Coimbatore; August 25 and 26 at Loyola College, Chennai; August 28 at Taj Vivanta, Kochi; August 30 at Dr. Ambedkar Convention Centre, Delhi.

To register, visit bit.ly/IEFTHEP2024 or scan the QR code



five-stage competition will be held online initially and participants will be divided into Junior and Senior categories.

Eligibility: Students from Classes 4 to 12.

Theme: iStartup a Good Thing for India.

More details at www.youthideathon.in

YI24

ThinkStartup and the Management Entrepreneurship Professional Skills Council (MEPSC), in association with the CBSE, have launched the fourth edition of Youth Ideathon (YI24). The

Build relationships

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



OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

I am doing the five-year LLB but am not sure if I want to be a lawyer or judge. I would like to be in the corporate sector. What should I do for that? Sivani

Dear Sivani,
To move to the corporate sector, you will need to acquire specialised knowledge on corporate and business law and understand business and management. Gain practical experience by interning at corporate law firms, legal departments, and corporations to acquire hands-on experience and insights into corporate legal practice. Find mentors and build relationships with experts in the corporate sector to gain insights, advice, and guidance on career pathways and opportunities. Develop transferable skills like communication, negotiation, and presentation to effectively tender legal advice, solutions, and recommendations to corporations, clients, and stakeholders. Strengthen your analytical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills to analyse complex issues, evaluate risks and implications, and develop effective strategies and solutions. Some career options are being a corporate lawyer, an in-house legal counsel, a legal consultant or advisor, a compliance officer, a corporate secretary, a business development or corporate affairs manager.

I am 21 and have finished

my B.A. History (Hons). I want to research social issues and also support my family financially. If I opt for M.A. Sociology, even after JRF, it doesn't pay very well. What should I do? Apoorva

Dear Apoorva,
Start by enhancing your skills and knowledge base. Develop your analytical and critical thinking skills to research social issues, analyse data and information, and develop useful insights and recommendations. Improve your technical skills in data analysis, data visualisation, research methodologies, and research tools and software. Gain practical hands-on experience and exposure via internships and volunteering opportunities across research projects in NGOs, research organisations, government agencies, media companies, and market research companies. Network and build relationships with professionals, researchers, and experts in the fields of social research, sociology, and related fields. Explore flexible part-time jobs and opportunities in research, analysis, content writing, and related fields across NGOs, research organisations, media companies, market research companies, freelance research, consulting opportunities in social research, market research, policy analysis, and content writing to gain experience, build a portfolio, and generate income while pursuing further studies and qualifications. Some career options are being a research analyst or associate in NGOs or research organisations, policy analyst or researcher in the government or public sector, content writer or researcher in media or

publishing, market research analyst or associate or social media analyst or researcher.

I finished B.Sc. Life Sciences in 2019. I took the UPSC exam twice but didn't qualify. I am taking a third shot. I am not interested in academics. What are my options if I don't clear the UPSC? Ruhy

Dear Ruhy,
There are various opportunities in the private sector for Life Science graduates such as clinical research associate, medical writer, biotechnologist, sales and marketing professional, or healthcare consultant. You can join the healthcare and pharma sector as a medical representative, administrator or a pharmacovigilance specialist. You can also be a health educator or a programme coordinator across NGOs and non-profits. With additional training in data analysis and bioinformatics, you can also be a bioinformatics analyst. Identify what you like to do and then acquire additional skills and certifications in areas like clinical research, medical writing, healthcare management and so on. You can also consider private tutoring or conduct training sessions and workshops across institutes and organisations. You can also freelance as a content writer or provide consultancy services to organisations in the healthcare and biotech sectors.

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



training programmes on ragging prevention should be implemented for both staff and students. Astonishingly, a significant gap exists in the understanding of what constitutes ragging and how to prevent it. These programmes should foster a culture of awareness, empathy, and accountability across the campus community.

Alternative orientation events: Recognising the vulnerability of freshers during the initial weeks of the semester, universities should organise alternative orientation events.

Despite the risks associated with orientation week, many universities fail to provide adequate support and guidance to incoming students.

Deploying student safety officers to provide additional support can mitigate the risk of ragging incidents.

Public accountability: Universities must be held accountable for their efforts in ragging prevention.

Introducing a Student Safety Score (SSS) system, evaluated annually and publicly disclosed, can inform prospective students and stakeholders about the institution's commitment to student well-being. The score can be relevant to funding, penalties, and perhaps a stay on promotions. Despite growing awareness of ragging, many universities remain reluctant to publicly disclose information about incidents or their prevention efforts.

Ragging continues to cast a dark shadow over higher education institutions, undermining the safety and dignity of students. By implementing proactive measures, universities can create safer and more inclusive learning environments. It's time to prioritise the well-being of students and eradicate ragging from our educational institutions for good.

Transparent reporting mechanisms: Implementing independent reporting mechanisms for ragging complaints is crucial. Many victims refrain from reporting incidents due to fear of reprisal or lack of confidence in the reporting process. Universities must ensure confidentiality and swift action in handling complaints.

Comprehensive education and awareness programmes: Mandatory

Time to say 'STOP'

While research provides valuable insights into the prevalence and nature of ragging, it is crucial to translate these into tangible and implementable actions.

Aashish Srivastava and Neerav Srivastava

Hazing, or ragging, has cast a long shadow over higher education institutions, and inflicted profound physical and psychological harm on students. As an initiation ritual, ragging often entails humiliation, abuse, and coercion of freshers by senior students, creating a toxic environment within educational institutions. While research underscores the severity of the issue across countries, it's imperative to delve deeper into actionable strategies to combat ragging and foster safer learning environments.

Understand the scale
In the United States, ragging affects over half of university students, with fraternities and sororities acting as hot spots. Three out of four students in Greek letter organisations have experienced ragging, including alarming practices such as physical assault and forced engagement in sexual acts.

Similarly, Australian universities witness ragging during orientation week,

where hazers subject freshers to feelings of solidarity and obedience, while simultaneously exploiting their vulnerability. Victims often endure humiliating ordeals, including forced consumption of alcohol and exposure to graphic activities.

In India and Sri Lanka, ragging has reached epidemic proportions. Despite anti-ragging laws and regulations, the practice persists, fuelled by entrenched social hierarchies and cultural biases. Specifically, in India, the Supreme Court has ruled that ragging is a violation of human rights and must be dealt with strictly. About 40% of university students face ragging, but only 8.6% report it. Between 2011 and 2019, 54 students committed suicide (averaging six each year) because of ragging.

In India, UGC guidelines, the Anti-Ragging Act and the 24-hour helpline have been ineffective in curtailing ragging. Complaints to the helpline go unanswered. In Sri Lanka, officials took action on only a few of the 3,500 ragging complaints filed by victims.

Combatting ragging
To effectively combat ragging, universities must prioritise the safety and well-being of their students as a foundational principle.

By acknowledging the seriousness of this issue and taking proactive steps, institutions can cultivate environments that promote respect, dignity, and inclusivity for all members of the university community. Here are some actionable strategies that can adopted:

Formation of Student Safety Committees: Universities should establish dedicated committees focused on student safety that should be empowered to monitor and address ragging incidents promptly.

Transparent reporting mechanisms: Implementing independent reporting mechanisms for ragging complaints is crucial. Many victims refrain from reporting incidents due to fear of reprisal or lack of confidence in the reporting process. Universities must ensure confidentiality and swift action in handling complaints.

Comprehensive education and awareness programmes: Mandatory

SCHOLARSHIPS

Panasonic Ratti Chhatr Scholarship

An initiative of Panasonic Life Solutions India.

Eligibility: Open to Indian students who have admission into B.E. or B.Tech. courses at any IIT in 2024-25 and have scored more than 75% marks in Class 12. Annual family income must not be more than ₹8 lakhs.

Reward: ₹70,250 a year

Application: Online

Deadline: August 15

www.b4s.in/edge/RCPS6

NSP National Means Cum Merit Scholarship Scheme

An initiative of the Department of School Education and Literacy, Government of India.

Eligibility: Open to students in Class 9 at a government, government-aided, or local body school and secured at least 60% in Class 8. Annual family income must be less than ₹3.5 lakhs.

Rewards: ₹12,000 per annum

Application: Online

Deadline: August 31

www.b4s.in/edge/NITE21

R.D. Sethna Education Loan

An initiative of the R D Sethna Scholarship Fund.

Eligibility: Open to Indian citizens who have secured admission to a recognised institute for higher studies

Reward: Loan at 2%

interest per annum

Application: Online

Deadline: August 31

www.b4s.in/edge/RDSS4

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

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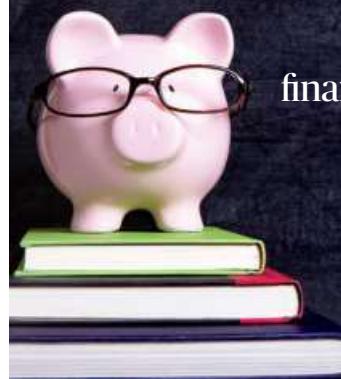
Appropriate training, credentials, and skills open up a world of opportunity in the Travel and Tourism industry



FREEPIK

Master your money

Five books on finance that every young adult should read



FREEPIK

Krishnan Vishwanathan

Financial literacy is a skill set that empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their money. Only a fraction of young adults are financially literate, highlighting the urgent need for greater education in this area. Take a proactive step towards mastering your finances by exploring these five transformative books.

The Snowball: Warren Buffett and the Business of Life by Alice Schroeder: Warren Buffett's journey from humble beginnings to unparalleled success is deeply inspiring, especially his emphasis on long-term investing and patience. This book is not just about Buffett's success; it's a blueprint for cultivating a mindset that leads to lasting wealth.

The Total Money Make-over by Dave Ramsey: Dave Ramsey's no-nonsense approach to money management helps one understand what goes into building good credit habits. If one diligently follows his debt reduction strategies, they can create a budget, slash unnecessary expenses, and systematically pay off debts. Ramsey's message – "financial peace is achievable through discipline and planning" – is useful in working towards financial freedom.

The Millionaire Next Door by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko: This eye-opening book challenges common misconceptions about wealth. It reshapes perspectives about wealth being equated with lavish lifestyles, and lays out

common traits among those who have accumulated wealth. It inspires one to adopt a more frugal approach to finances and automate savings and invest a portion of one's income on a regular basis, laying the groundwork for long-term financial security.

The Millionaire Fastlane by M.J. DeMarco: This book, with its message of value creation and innovation, can ignite the entrepreneurial spirit and make readers think about what is true financial freedom. Is there an alternative road to wealth that doesn't involve "settling for less"? This book has all the answers.

Your Money or Your Life by Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez: The fact that financial discipline can be aligned with personal values is a game changer. Use the insights from the book and start tracking expenses and evaluating whether each purchase brings true fulfillment. You might notice a shift to prioritising experiences over material possessions, significantly enhancing your overall happiness and financial well-being.

Whether you're a student embarking on a new academic journey or a young professional navigating the complexities of early adulthood, the lessons from these books will serve as invaluable guides. Remember, the path to financial literacy is not about perfection but progress. Commit to expanding your financial horizons and embracing a future of financial empowerment.

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The writer is Executive Director and Founder, RING.

Varun Chotia

In India, economic reforms have impacted business education and made it more industry focused, as programmes needed to adapt to prepare students for the job market. When it comes to ensuring that education adapts to the shifting demands of businesses, B-Schools began to mandate internships to give students an idea of the real-world.

Further, the growth of new industries like analytics, e-commerce and information technology required modifications to the curricula, leading to the introduction of new-age specialisations such as Business Analytics to address the increased demand for data-driven decision making.

New courses

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) focussed attention on the need for financial and tax knowledge. B-Schools responded by introducing courses on Investment Banking, FinTech and Financial Risk Management.

Courses on digital strategy, cybersecurity, machine learning and Artificial

Ring in the changes

Economic reforms, digital innovations and environmental concerns have led to changes in the curricula of B-Schools



seen a rise in Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Reporting in company practices. This has led to the creation of courses such as Business Ethics and Sustainability, ESG Reporting and Risk Analysis.

The economic reforms also led to a rise in entrepreneurship. Joining this trend, B-Schools began to establish specialised Entrepreneurship Development Cells to promote a culture of innovation and offer financial help, networking opportunities, and mentorship to those with potential and talent.

Other activities

In order to stay attuned to market developments and offer students insights into current practices and trends, B-Schools are also organising guest lectures, industry visits, and projects that allow students to get practical information and skills that are immediately transferable to the real world.

Besides these adaptations, another important transformation in business education is the rise in interdisciplinary approaches. This acknowledges that business functions in a globalised world are highly interconnected

and enables management students to garner a holistic understanding of business operations and nurtures the capability to navigate the intricacies of contemporary environments. Foreign internships and alliances with universities abroad offer global perspectives and empower students with cross-cultural perspectives.

The adoption of experiential learning techniques like project-based learning, case studies, and simulated environments also offer students hands-on exposure and foster problem-solving, critical thinking and teamwork abilities that are essential components for success today.

The reshaping of business education to align with the changes in the economy and industry has created a hands-on, industry-focused learning. Management education institutions must continue to adapt to emerging trends and embrace a forward-thinking approach to ensure that students are agents of future change.

The writer is Associate Professor and Economics Programme Director - PGDM, Jaipuria Institute of Management

Creativity with purpose

Design has the potential to impact lives and Design Education should teach students how to use this power with discretion and responsibility

cation needs to play a critically different role. It seamlessly stitches together each student's journey in a unique way. How we think, what we do, who we are and what matters to us are the touchstones of the entire process of design. This is then overlapped with the needs, aspirations and wants of our users. The outcome is not inward looking; instead it begins with the individual and encompasses the world that we are part of and that surrounds us.

In design education, we learn to turn our minds to 'making situations better' and to 'deciding the criteria by which to make such a decision'. As educators, we need to our students to be future ready. This means what and how we teach have to be stream-

lined into the future of work and the ever-changing world of design. It also means that we engage with cutting-edge technology through specialised labs and state-of-the-art facilities and impart the neces-

sary skills required to navigate a volatile world: the skills of creative thinking, design thinking, conceptualisation, collaboration, experimentation, brainstorming, all of which need to be integrated into the

curriculum. We should empower our students to not only use AI productively, but also ensure that they become the creators or contributors towards the next generation AI.

All this brings up the core question of ethics and responsibility. We must endeavour to make our students leaders of tomorrow by integrating ideas of sustainability, responsible consumption through the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and key human and social imperatives.

Inclusive design

Design educators must teach students to use their powers – to change, assign value, uphold importance, ignore, decide the pace of change, include, diversify or exclude – in a judicious manner. As Kat Holmes, author of *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design* states, "For better or for worse, the people who design the touch points of society can determine who can participate and who is left out... Design can reme-

dy exclusion." Design education can teach how to use this power with discretion and responsibility. Responsibility is about awareness, for the greater good, beyond business and beyond sustaining client relationships. Responsible design has to bring in efficiency, aesthetics, and ethics. Ethics are the cornerstone of how we make informed choices, our awareness of the consequences of our actions and how we choose to prioritise one action over the other. Designers make choices that influence the material and visual culture of society. Therefore, sustainability, criticality and materiality need to be embedded into the curricular structure of design education so that students are able to utilise new opportunities created by technology, materials, processes and so on while they examine and address global imperatives.

The writer is Director, Unitedworld Institute of Design (UID), Delhi-NCR Campus, GD Goenka University, Gurugram.



FREEPIK

The writer is Executive Director, Unitedworld Institute of Design (UID), Delhi-NCR Campus, GD Goenka University, Gurugram.