

A. Joseph Dorairaj

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 methodology. 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?

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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.

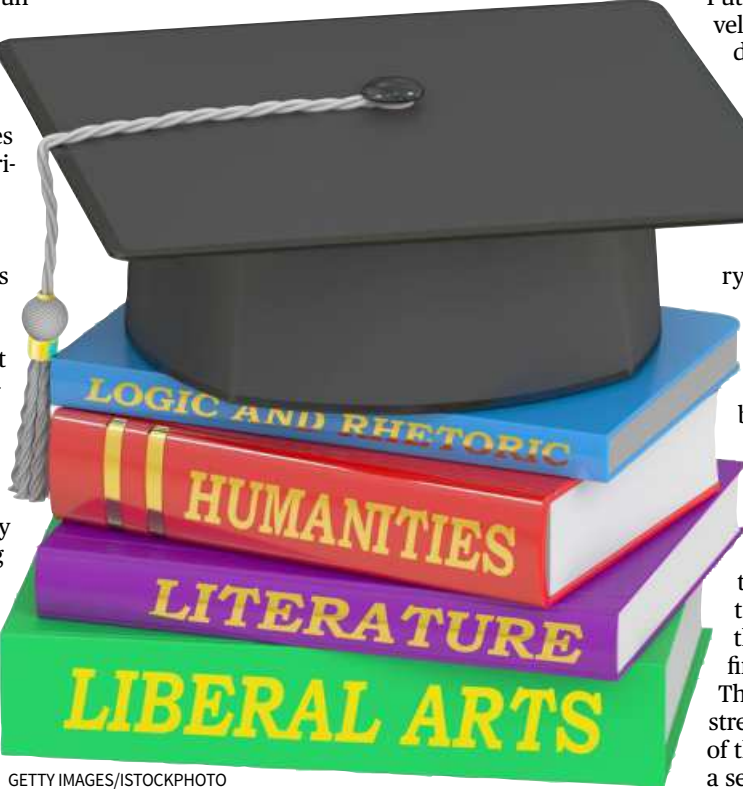
But the Humanities, especially from a postmodern perspective that has called for an “incredulity towards metanarratives”, speak of truths in the plural. This has unnerved not only the hard sciences but also the Social Sciences that rely

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

### 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/SGSEI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/SGSEI)

### 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/GUAI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/GUAI)

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 (IISERS) located in various cities; Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru; Aryabhata 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 criterion 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](mailto: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. This problem-solving approach, which emphasises adaptability and creative solutions, may 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. While many institutions rush to implement Design Thinking tools and processes, they often miss its deeper essence: the cultivation of a designer’s mindset. The tools, while important, are secondary to developing the cognitive framework that enables their effective use. Traditional approaches, centred on producing job-ready graduates, often churn out individuals adept at executing established solutions but ill-prepared to innovate or adapt to new challenges. Design Thinking, when embraced as a mindset instead of a mere set of tools, nurtures the mind to handle uncertainty and complexity, offers a transformative path forward, enabling students to think critically, empathise deeply, and approach problems with creativity and adaptability.

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



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## Designing minds

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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 focus shifts from merely teaching problem-solving to cultivating cognitive flexibility and enabling students to reframe and reimagine problems entirely. The process of designing the thinking requires moving beyond the mechanical application of design tools to develop key cognitive capabilities: First, students must learn

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. 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 questions, constantly 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.



