

EDUCATION PLUS

GET THE EDGE

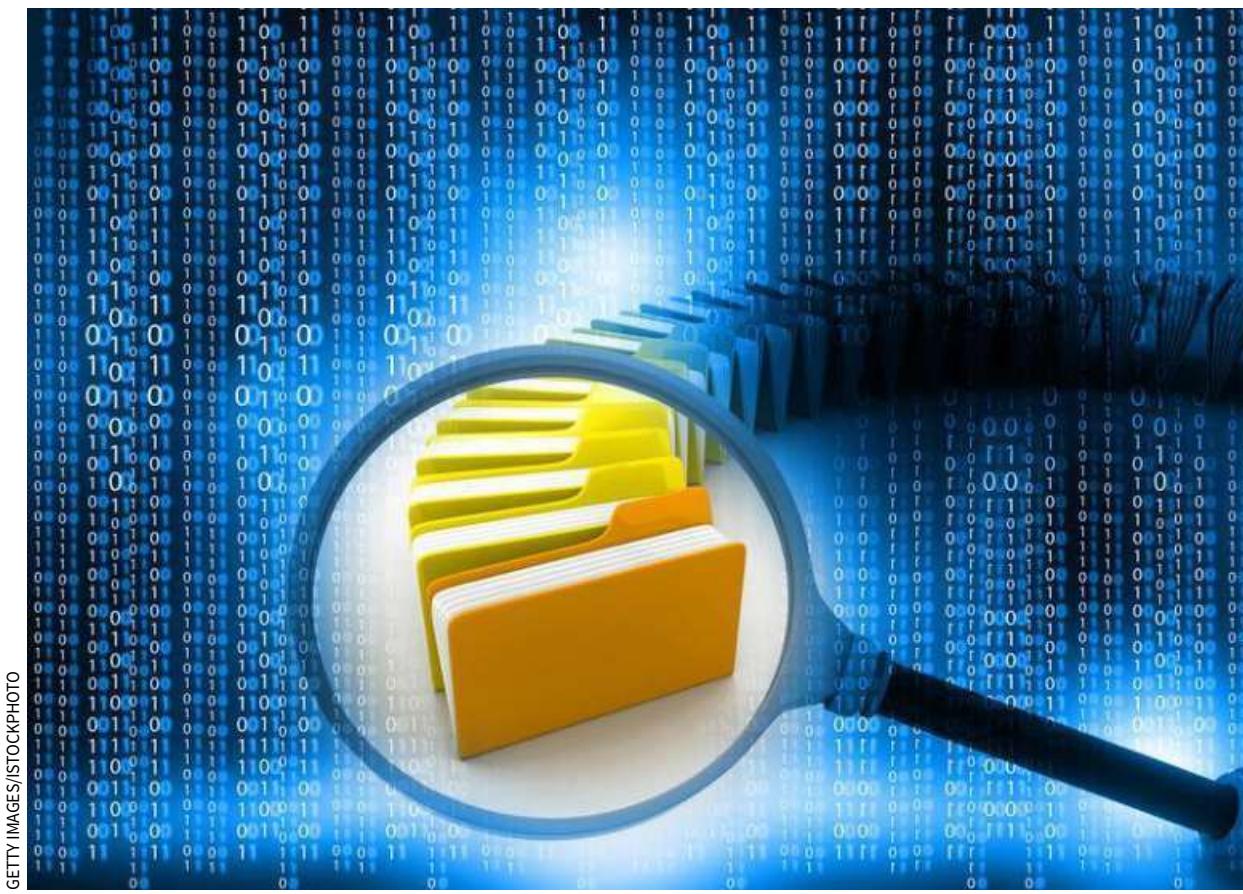
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facebook.com/thehindutwitter.com/the_hinduinstagram.com/the_hindu**R. W. Alexander
Jesusudan**

With over 1,100 universities and nearly 45,000 colleges catering to around 4.5 crore students, India continues to strengthen its position as one of the world's largest education hubs. The country also aims to achieve 50% gross enrollment ratio (GER) in higher education by 2035. To achieve this target, India must strengthen all areas of higher education. Government and private institutions are working towards this, through various initiatives such as the One Nation One Subscription (ONOS).

What is ONOS?

The scheme aims to provide nationwide access to major scholarly e-journals from prominent publishers across disciplines such as STEM, Medicine, Management, Social Sciences and Humanities. The UGC's Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET) centre is to act as the implementing agency for ONOS. The scheme will give 6,400 institutions across the country (including central and state universities, colleges and research institutions) and 1.2 crore students, faculty, and researchers access to over 13,000 top journals including global ones such as *Elsevier*, *Springer-Nature*, *Taylor & Francis*, and *Wiley*. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) Act seeks to



Fuel a knowledge economy

Why the One Nation One Subscription should be extended to private universities and colleges

boost research HEIs in smaller towns with plans for central funding to support Indian authors in paying Article Processing Charges for quality open-

access journals. However, private universities have been left out of the ambit of ONOS.

Before the 1990s, the higher education land-

scape was dominated by government-funded institutions. Economic liberalisation also led to various transformational measures including establishment of

private universities and colleges. As a result, today, around 80% of students pursue higher education in private universities and colleges. In the last two decades, the number of these colleges and universities has expanded in response to the increasing demand for higher education.

Research focussed

Apart from offering programmes in emerging fields such as Robotics, AI, Fintech, Precision Technologies, Cybersecurity, Design Thinking and more, they also offer international exposure, industry-

linked learning, interdisciplinary and flexible academic options and other benefits to students. Many of these institutions are located in urban and semi-urban areas and account for nearly 36% of the student population. Apart from this, many private universities have positioned themselves as research-and innovation-focussed, as Bansal et.al. (2019) note.

Some are very large with multiple campuses, modern infrastructure, and faculty members enabling them to compete with and match the research output of well-known government-funded institutions. Some even project themselves as the second-largest contributors to India's research output after the IITs. Quality publications, spending on faculty development and infrastructure creation, automation of libraries, including establishment of digital libraries, RFID, and other technological advances have all contributed to this.

Considering that private HEIs have made immense contributions to the education landscape and the growth manifested in many areas, extending ONOS to such institutions would help the country achieve the goal of a developed India by 2035. This will not strain the country's financial resources and will help India develop a robust knowledge economy.

The writer is the former rector of Reva University, Bengaluru; former Pro Vice-Chancellor of HITS, Chennai; and former Principal and Secretary of Madras Christian College, Chennai.

SCHOLARSHIPS**STEM Scholars**

An initiative by Nasscom Foundation and supported by Optum CSR initiative.

Eligibility: Students in the third and fourth-year of B.E. or B.Tech in Computer Science, Pharmacy, and Life Sciences or pursuing in the fourth of fifth year of a five-year Integrated Engineering Programme in an institution in Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai or Hyderabad and have scored minimum 65% in Class 12 and have an annual family income not exceeding ₹800,000.

Rewards: ₹30,000.

Application: Online

Deadline: December 26 www.b4s.in/edge/TCPS34

previous academic year and have an annual family income not exceeding ₹250,000.

Rewards: Up to 80% of course fees

Application: Online

Deadline: December 26 www.b4s.in/edge/NCSSP1

Suzlon Scholarship

An initiative by Suzlon Group

Eligibility: Female students in Class 9 and students in the first year of B.E. or B.Tech. or diploma in Engineering domiciled and enrolled in recognised institutions in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Damian, and Puducherry and have scored minimum 50% and have an annual family income not exceeding ₹600,000.

Rewards: ₹30,000.

Application: Online

Deadline: December 26 www.b4s.in/edge/SZSP4

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

The Indian six

Six students have been selected as Rhodes Scholars-Elect for India 2026. They are Manhar Bansal from NLSIU, Bengaluru; Yogita from Université Paris-Saclay and Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland; Nikhita Sampath from St. Joseph's College of Law, Bengaluru; Taif Altaf, a Young India Fellow from Ashoka University, Sonipat; Suprabhat Reddy Dwaram from ISI, Delhi, and Aniketa Kabir from Azim Premji University, Bengaluru.

plines, cultures, and geographies must also be recognised and rewarded.

Achieving this requires stronger collaboration between industry and academia. Tech companies can mentor students on projects addressing real community challenges, such as AI-based crop monitoring for small farmers, affordable fintech solutions, or assistive technologies for people with disabilities. These experiences demonstrate that technology is not only about efficiency or profit, but also about enhancing well-being and opportunity.

With the world's largest youth population and a growing technology sector, India can influence the direction of global innovation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and values-based education, but policies alone are not enough. Universities must create space for ethical debates, foster projects that connect science and humanities, and engage students with communities to develop real-world solutions. Such an approach benefits both society and business, as global markets increasingly value environmental and social responsibility. Global markets are placing greater emphasis on environmental and social responsibility. Future leaders who bring together empathy and foresight will not only navigate risks effectively but also identify opportunities that others might overlook.

The future of tech leadership depends not on technical skills alone, but on choices that prioritise people, the planet, and purpose. Educators, policymakers, and industry mentors must integrate ethics, sustainability, and values into learning so that responsible action starts in the classroom.

The writer is Professor, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, School of Computing, Mohan Babu University, Tirupati.

Reframe your thinking

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



OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

I am in Class 12 (Humanities). My interests are History and Literature, but people say it is better to pursue Economics or Psychology. Would International Relations, which will enable me to study global history, be an option? Literature is one of my passions. I love reading and the creative aspect of the arts. What courses can I take that align with my interests? Naina

Dear Naina,
The key is to find ways to connect your interests to careers. International Relations and Global Studies address your interest in global history and provide a structured, respected academic and career path. Look up programmes such as B.A. (Hons) International Relations, Global Affairs, or Political Science with an IR specialisation, which can lead to careers in diplomacy, policy research, international development, journalism, or public affairs and risk analysis.

If Literature and Creative Arts excite you, consider a B.A. (Hons) in English Literature or Comparative Literature or a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (offered by some institutions). Career paths could be content strategist, copywriter, editor, technical writer, journalist, social media manager or teaching in schools/colleges.

You can also look at a hybrid interdisciplinary path which can combine your interests. For example,

History, Literature and Media Studies can lead to a career in documentary filmmaking, historical research for films or television, or arts journalism. A combination of History, Literature and Cultural Studies or Museum Work can lead to jobs such as curator, archivist, museum educator, or cultural resource manager.

History and Public Policy or Public Administration can lead to paths such as policy analyst, legislative assistant and so on.

Look at History and Literature as foundational subjects and research for specific courses within the larger degree. For interdisciplinary majors, look up JNU's School of International Studies, Ashoka University, Christ University, and St. Stephen's College and Lady Shri Ram College in Delhi University that allow you to take electives across departments.

I am a Political Science student and want to pursue a PG Diploma in Rural Development. Which are the best institutions for this? Also, what will be the job opportunities? Susan

Dear Susan,
A PG Diploma in Rural Development is a strategic value addition to a Political Science degree. Research programmes offered by IIM-Ahmedabad, TISS Mumbai and Tuljapur, Xavier Institute of Social Research and Institute of Rural Management, Anand, that offer related courses. Other institutes that you can consider are National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad; and Indian Institute of

Health Management Research, Bengaluru and Jaipur. Also research State and Central Universities for programmes.

Job opportunities exist across the government and public sector, in NGOs and non-profits, the banking industry, and in the corporate sector. The first offers roles such as rural development or block development officer in organisations such as NABARD and State Rural Livelihood Missions. NGOs require people to coordinate and manage projects and monitor and evaluate them. The corporate sector will offer roles across CSR projects and managing projects in rural areas.

Banking and Microfinance offer roles in regional rural banks and in branches in rural areas.

I finished B.A. (Hons) Hindi in 2023 and teach at an NGO. I'm preparing for the SSC CPO exam. I worry that I might fall behind in my career. Ayushi

Dear Ayushi,
Leverage your Hindi expertise and look for content or copy writing roles in digital marketing agencies, news portals, ed-tech companies and marketing companies. Create a portfolio with samples of your writing in Hindi.

Consider translation or subtitling in OTT platforms, media houses, publishing companies and other agencies. Platforms like Upwork and Fiverr have many translation gigs to build experience. Your experience at the NGO can also lead to a CSR job in a corporate or other NGOs.

Beyond SSC CPO, try for the UPSC, State PSC Exams, Railway Recruitment Board,

and Staff Selection Commission exams for roles across various ministries. Banks also need candidates proficient in the local language, so attempt the banking exams. Be active on LinkedIn, Naukri.com, and Indeed.

I am doing B.Tech. Civil Engineering. I am from a lower-middle-class family and everyone expects me to prepare for the Civil Services. What are my other options? Sai Ganesh

Dear Sai,
Reflect and decide your action plan and then talk to your family about your path. For now, focus on your course, as it can lead to a good job via campus placement and allow you to address the financial pressure at home. Apart from considering jobs at core construction and infrastructure companies, also consider an MBA in Project Management from a good institute or a Master's in Public Policy from institutes such as IIM-Bangalore or TISS or a Master's in Urban Planning or Transportation

Engineering. These are much in demand and will prepare you for high-level roles.

You can also consider jobs in PSUs such as ONGC, BHEL, or NTPC, for which you may need to take the GATE or their own exams. Also, look at taking State PSC Exams where the competition is less intense than the UPSC. Government Fellowship Programmes, like the Young Professional Fellowship or roles with NITI Aayog, are fixed-term roles that involve working directly with government ministries on key projects.

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.

Make it human-centric

Why tech leadership must begin in the classroom

J. Avanija

In an age where Artificial Intelligence generates reports, robots perform surgeries, and algorithms shape the content people see, it might seem that the future of technology will depend entirely on engineering breakthroughs. Yet another truth is emerging: the most influential tech leaders will not only be skilled coders, engineers, or designers but also those who connect technology with human values, who understand not just how to build, but why, and for whom.

Essential skills
This shift toward human-centric leadership is essential. Challenges such as climate change, data privacy, digital inclusion, and algorithmic bias cannot be addressed by technical expertise alone. They require ethical judgment, empathy, cultural awareness, and a systems-level understanding of society, with these foundations effectively nurtured in the classroom.

Classrooms must evolve from centres of instruction into spaces that cultivate leadership alongside technical knowledge. This includes embedding ethics in technical subjects and en-

couraging real-world, community-focused projects. For example, an electronics assignment to design solar-powered devices for rural schools is a technical challenge that also teaches students to consider affordability, durability, and user needs. Cross-disciplinary learning is equally vital. Computer Science students must engage with subjects like Ethics, Economics, or Social Sciences as with algorithms.

Collaborative skills
Leadership is not just about managing projects; it is also about working effectively with people. Activities that develop teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills equip students to lead in diverse and multicultural settings. Success in education is often measured through grades, campus placements, and starting salaries. While important, these metrics do not fully capture what makes a great leader. Collaborative achievements, long-term societal impact, and the ability to work across disci-

plines, cultures, and geographies must also be recognised and rewarded.

Achieving this requires stronger collaboration between industry and academia. Tech companies can mentor students on projects addressing real community challenges, such as AI-based crop monitoring for small farmers, affordable fintech solutions, or assistive technologies for people with disabilities. These experiences demonstrate that technology is not only about efficiency or profit, but also about enhancing well-being and opportunity.

With the world's largest youth population and a growing technology sector, India can influence the direction of global innovation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and values-based education, but policies alone are not enough. Universities must create space for ethical debates, foster projects that connect science and humanities, and engage students with communities to develop real-world solutions. Such an approach benefits both society and business, as global markets increasingly value environmental and social responsibility. Global markets are placing greater emphasis on environmental and social responsibility. Future leaders who bring together empathy and foresight will not only navigate risks effectively but also identify opportunities that others might overlook.

The future of tech leadership depends not on technical skills alone, but on choices that prioritise people, the planet, and purpose. Educators, policymakers, and industry mentors must integrate ethics, sustainability, and values into learning so that responsible action starts in the classroom.

The writer is Professor, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, School of Computing, Mohan Babu University, Tirupati.

Anurag Gupta

The world is rapidly evolving, and so are situations and problems. The chance to create something extraordinary is not limited to high-tech laboratories or companies. It is in the problems that we face every day and still choose to ignore. There are numerous moments in which Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) intersect with our daily lives. Imagine if young people started tracking their lives through the point of view of STEM subjects. They will learn that many problems go unnoticed. This is called a STEM audit.

Potential for innovation
According to a 2023 NITI Aayog report, India adds nearly 3.1 crore students to higher education each year. If even a fraction were encouraged to conduct a STEM audit of their surroundings, the collective potential for innova-

Make innovation a habit

Why students should run a STEM audit of their daily lives



tion would be immense. Running a STEM audit of daily life does not mean waiting for grand problems to appear. It begins with small questions: Why is there so much food waste in the hostel mess? Why are schools still following traditional means to impart education? This not only sharpens problem-solving abilities but also prepares students for the workplace. Innovation cannot remain limited to labs or annual hackathons; it has to permeate into everyday life.

Curiosity is one of the most important skills for the 21st century, and it is best nurtured through STEM education. This is also where the right support system and mentorship become crucial. As Dr. Anuradha Prasad, an innovation consultant, explains, "Students need someone to help them move from just spotting a problem to actually building a solution." A STEM audit becomes truly effective when it is backed by an ecosystem that allows ideas to be openly discussed, rigorously tested, and continuously refined, enabling students to transform curiosity into innovation.

Social responsibility
The real strength of a STEM audit is not only about helping students get good jobs, but also about teaching them social responsibility. When young people start looking at their surroundings through the lens of science and technology, they begin

to create solutions that help people such as a cheap water filter for villages, a solar-powered charging point in a rural area, or even a chatbot that supports mental health. In 2022, a group of Indian students was awarded at the World Robot Olympiad for building a robot that assisted differently-abled individuals with mobility. Their journey began with observing challenges faced by a relative at home.

A STEM audit of daily life is not about adding another academic exercise to an already busy student schedule. It is about shifting perspective. Encouraging students to run STEM audits will help them move beyond passive consumption of technology to active creation. In doing so, they will help design the future. If every student begins this journey today, tomorrow's India will not just be tech-driven, it will be innovation-led.

The writer is CEO and co-founder of STEMROBO Technologies.



CAREER CUES
Richa Dwivedi Saklani

Find your voice

Why communication is more than just fluency in English

Anas Shoeb

In classes, college interviews, or even in normal conversations, communication is regularly confused with language skills, particularly in English. However, speaking English fluently does not necessarily equal being a good communicator.

Real communication is more than grammar and accent. It's clarity of mind, confidence of expression, and courage to connect genuinely. You might have learned English for decades, but can still fear speaking up or fail to get others to comprehend your thoughts. That's the distinction between learning a language and becoming a master of communication.

Vital skill

Consider the last time you heard someone speak flawless English but left you stumped. Now consider a teacher, senior, or friend who perhaps doesn't speak the language fluently, but made you understand what they were saying. Fluency is with how you speak; communication is with what and why you speak. It's time we transformed the way we perceive this vital skill.

The world values clarity, collaboration, and creativity. Whether you're giving a presentation, participating in a debate, or pitching your ideas, your ability to express yourself clearly and confidently can open doors that grades alone cannot. Clarity results from understanding your subject and explaining it in straightforward terms. Confidence results from practice, preparation, and having faith

in your viewpoint.

Education in India has laid emphasis on memorisation rather than expression. Students are taught how to take exams, but not to convey their ideas. But when they venture out of the classroom – into internships, interviews, or actual interactions with people – this disparity becomes apparent.

Many talented students do not put forward their ideas because they are not confident or do not want to be judged. Communication should no longer be considered a "soft skill." It is a life skill.

Secret ingredient

Confidence is not innate, it is developed. Each time you raise your hand to ask a question, volunteer to present, or give your opinion, you're building your confidence muscle. Remember: confidence is not loudness. It is knowing what you are communicating and having faith in your voice. Effective communicators listen as much as they talk.

If schools and colleges are really serious about getting students ready for the future, communication should be taught, practised, and feted daily. Teachers should make them verbalise ideas instead of just memorising them.

The essence of communication is connection, not flawless language. Remember: fluency will awe, but confidence and clarity inspire. When you learn to speak on purpose, you don't simply find your voice, you find your authority to build the world you desire.

The writer is co-founder and Chief Learning Officer at Oratrics.

campus. Established in 1857, the University of Mumbai is one of India's oldest centres of higher learning. Its iconic Fort campus is home to celebrated Neo-Gothic landmarks such as the Rajabai Clock Tower, the University Library, and the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Convocation Hall.

Tapan Kumar Nayak

Conventionally, management programmes in India have relied on English – the language of business and upward mobility – as the sole medium of instruction. But, in a country where over around 1.3 billion people speak more than 22 scheduled languages and hundreds of regional dialects, the exclusivity of English in MBA classrooms creates both opportunities and challenges. To promote an inclusive Management education across the country, a multi-lingual MBA programme, integrating English with regional languages, may not be an academic experiment but a strategic necessity. The benefits are many.

Access and inclusivity: To cater to talented graduates from tier 2-and-3 cities programmes in English plus regional languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Odia, Bengali, Gujarati, Telugu, or Marathi will democratise access to Management education

create new ways of doing things, learning, shopping, entertaining and growing. The current churn is a shift in priorities from repetitive coding and testing to more creative roles in designing services and software.

Engineering: With billions of dollars being poured into automation and product development across house appliance and IoT, transport and space exploration, students interested in Mechanical, Electronics and Robotics fields can expect opportunities for growth.

Biotech and Chemical Engineering: High-growth industries with the increase in investments in vaccine and drug development, genetic modifications and editing in agriculture and medicine, and environmental re-engineering.

Applied Maths: Offers many career possibilities including Data Science and Statistics, Financial Analysis, Fintech and Investment Banking, Artificial Intelligence product development, and various forms of consulting.

Humanities and Social Sciences

Public Policy and Governance: Increasingly important as countries are facing issues of inequality, AI regulation, climate change and public health.

Climate Communication and Sustainability Strategy: As companies are pushed to go beyond token CSR and show real environmental impact, there is a huge demand for people who can read climate data, understand policy, and explain it clearly to

investors, customers and communities.

Public Health Communication: With worsening environmental conditions, and diseases on the rise, people who can translate medical and scientific information into stories, campaigns and conversations are in demand.

People Analytics: What used to be just hiring and payroll is now all about understanding culture, burnout, performance and inclusion. Professionals are now using surveys, interviews and analytics tools to ask: What helps people work their best? Why are we losing talent? How can we design fairer, more inclusive systems?

Creative careers

User Experience and Design Researchers: As every app, website and service competes to feel "effortless" for users, the focus is shifting from mak-

ing things look good to understanding behaviour, emotions and pain points, and then shaping products around them.

Digital Content Strategy and Narrative Design:

This is about understanding audiences, culture and platforms, and crafting long-term story arcs across video, audio and interactive media to shape public opinion for brands and even governments.

Urban and Community Development:

As cities rethink housing, transport, safety and public spaces, professionals are required to work with governments and NGOs to make urban life more liveable and inclusive.

Game Design and Interactive Media:

With the gamification of entertainment, education, fitness, mental health and even hiring, this involves building worlds, characters and experiences across consoles, mobile and VR.

tion, and adaptability in diverse environments.

Bridging global and local contexts:

India's economy largely depends on regional diversity. From family-owned businesses in small towns to multinational corporations in metros, managers operate across linguistic and cultural dimensions.

Hence, a multi-lingual management education ensures graduates are fluent in the global language of business English while also being able to engage customers and clients in local markets.

While considering the importance of this idea, it is equally important to develop strategies to implement it.

Curriculum design:

While core management concepts can be taught in English, case discussions, projects, and simulations can be taught in the regional language. For instance, marketing strategy can be explored through case studies of rural consumer behaviour in a regional language, supplemented with

solving skills, and cultural adaptability. Students can translate their learning into better negotiation, cross-cultural communica-



A strategic asset

Why management institutes in India should develop multi-lingual MBA programmes

without diluting its rigour.

Cognitive advantage: Multilingualism helps leverage qualities such as cognitive flexibility, problem-

hence the AI-enabled translation tools and multi-lingual LMS platforms will bridge language gaps.

Industry partnership:

Recruiters often require managers who can lead in local markets while reporting in English to headquarters. Collaborations with industry can help design multi-lingual modules aligned with workforce expectations, ensuring employability and relevance.

However, implementing a multi-lingual MBA is not free from challenges. Translating technical jargon, ensuring consistency in assessments, and avoiding dilution of academic standards require thoughtful strategies.

All stakeholders – private institutions, education innovators and policy makers – have to work synergistically towards this goal.

This collaborative effort will ensure that Indian B-Schools embrace multilingualism as a strategic asset rather than a challenge.

The writer is the Director, Jaipuria School of Business, Ghaziabad.

Time to protect

The Tata Trusts signed an MoU with the University of Mumbai to restore and upgrade the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Convocation Hall, a Grade-1 heritage building on the University's historic Fort

English language for theoretical frameworks.

Training and resource development:

To effectively implement these programmes, teachers should be trained to teach bilingually and create study material in both English and the required regional languages. This can encourage partnerships with industry to help design multi-lingual modules aligned with workforce expectations, ensuring employability and relevance.

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