

“Education was transformative in my life”

Safeena Husain, founder of Educate Girls and winner of the WISE Prize for Education 2023, talks about how and why she helps girls to go back to school

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Safeena Husain grew up in adverse circumstances. “Poverty, violence, abuse... my family circumstances were difficult,” says the first Indian woman recipient of the WISE Prize for Education. At one point, she had to drop out of school. Her family was keen to marry off the adolescent girl. But, with the support of an aunt, Husain went on to graduate from the London School of Economics. “Education was transformative in my life,” she says. After working abroad, she returned to India in 2007 to found the non-profit organisation Educate Girls, which identifies girls between five and 14 years in rural and educationally backward areas and gets them into schools. In the last 16 years, Educate Girls has led 1.4 million girls back to school and has expanded its reach to work across Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Post the pandemic, a road trip across UP showed Husain that an entire generation of girls were being robbed off education. “Marriage was a cost-effective solution during the pandemic. We wanted to

create a second chance for them,” she says. So the first phase of Project Pragati was launched in Rajasthan in 2021, with 300 girls between 15 and 25 years. In two years, 7,000 girls re-enrolled in schools with 61% successfully clearing the Class 10 exam in the first attempt. In 2023, Husain won The Hindu businessline Changemaker Award in the Social Transformation Category and the WISE Prize awarded by the Qatar Foundation. Excerpts from an interview:

You have worked across four states for over a decade. What is the status of education for girls in India?

According to government figures, 66 million girls will not be attending high school and in 5% of India's villages, 40% of girls are still out of primary school. The enrollment rates have increased at the primary level but the problem has shifted to older girls, as the drop out rates going into secondary education are high. Girls are still battling with household chores, family responsibilities, discrimination and patriarchal mindsets.



What was Educate Girls' roadmap when it started?

There are seven lakh villages in India. I got a list of 26 red districts with a critical gender gap in education, of which nine were in Rajasthan. I started in 2007 with 50 villages in Pali district as a social experiment. Now we work in 25,000 villages across Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

What is your modus operandi?

We work in partnership with the state governments

leveraging the existing educational infrastructure to identify, enrol and retain out-of-school girls and improve their foundational skills in literacy and numeracy. We have a robust network of 3,000 employees and 18,000 volunteers drawn from the villages and trained in community ownership: My Village, My Problem, I Am the Solution. These gender champions do door-to-door survey, convince families and ensure girls are enrolled into the nearest government school and also help them with remedial classes in English, Hindi and Maths.

How challenging has it been to address the issue of

education disparity and social challenges?

We started our pilot phase in pre-RTE (Right To Education) days. We did not want to miss out on a single girl but access to people was difficult. Doors were shut on our faces, as parents felt their daughters were better off learning and doing household chores in preparation for marriage rather than wasting time, energy, and money at school. There are people who still believe a goat is an asset and a girl a liability.

How did the change come about?

After RTE came into effect in 2010, people became more

aligned to the thought of educating girls. Once we got that access, we could authoritatively ask people to send girls to school because it is their right. We could also give the girls extra coaching. We had to work differently in every region.

What is the difference now?

There has been progress. The drop-out problem at the primary level has shrunk considerably. But secondary education has new hotspots because the older girls are at risk of never completing their studies due to being over-age or married with children, or facing academic setbacks. However, compared to 15

years ago, girls are gaining confidence now and have aspirations.

Is that why you launched Project Pragati?

Yes. We found girls are vulnerable and take a lot of shame on themselves. The girl's education becomes the first casualty of any calamity that strikes the family, from illness to debt. We are helping older girls restart their lives by writing the Class 10 exam and following it up with ITI skills and training that will fetch them jobs of nurses, Anganwadi or ASHA workers, or schools teachers.

What do you foresee for the girls who fall off the education map?

It took us 10 years to enter homes and convince families. The mindset is changing, but very slowly. Learning has to be gender-neutral. But when you do not have the gender lens, girls get missed. If we have all the tools of their transitioning and equip our girls with education, then their transformation can be rapid.

Your work has won global recognition. What's next?

Never to lose sight of our primary objective: to enhance the access to and the quality of education for over 15 million children by 2025. To impact the lives of 10 million out-of-schools girls over next 10 years under Pragati scheme.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Tata Capital Pankh Scholarship

An initiative of Tata Capital Limited to support students from economically weaker sections. **Eligibility:** Indian students in Classes 11/12, or undergraduate or diploma and polytechnic courses at recognised institutions who have scored at least 60% marks in the preceding class. Annual family income must be less than or equal to ₹2.5 lakhs. **Rewards:** Up to 80% of tuition fees or amount ranging from ₹10,000-12,000 (whichever is less) **Application:** Online **Deadline:** March 10 www.b4s.in/edge/TCPS23

Quad Fellowship

An initiative of the Governments of Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S., which is administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE), a global not-for-profit organisation. **Eligibility:** Open to citizens or legal permanent residents of the above countries who are at least 18 years old and hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent in a STEM field and demonstrate a record of superior academic achievement at the undergraduate level. **Rewards:** \$40,000 (one-time) and other benefits. **Application:** Online **Deadline:** April 1 www.b4s.in/edge/QUFD1

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

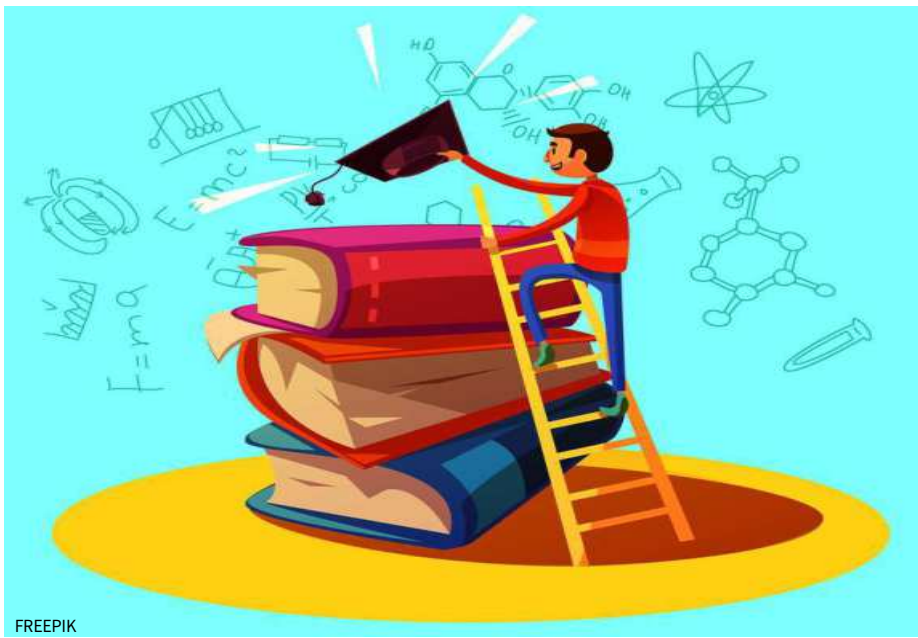
Focus on quality education

T.G. Sitharam

Imparting education is vital but ensuring 'quality' education will make the real difference. For India, the need is to grow in each sector and in every aspect and to develop technical human resources of global standards. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is determined to take every possible effort to uplift the quality of technical and management education in India and also to ensure that, by 2047, the country evolves as one of the main 'Global Study Destination' for its quality education. With a focus on quality education, the AICTE has introduced and implemented various reformative measures at approved institutions to uplift the quality of technical and management education.

Procedure
In concurrence with the AICTE Act 1987, a major decision was taken to bring BBA, BMS and BCA courses under its ambit. In November 2023, after a detailed discussion with and assessment by expert committee members, the AICTE announced its decision to regulate these from the 2024-25 academic year. For the first time, the AICTE also posted the draft of the Approval Process Handbook in the public domain to seek feedback. In coordination with the expert committee and stakeholders, the organisation analysed each norm and regulation so that the process would be easier and convenient for the institutions applying for approval. This decision to bring the BBA and BCA programmes under AICTE has a broader vision to enhance the quality, relevance and competitiveness of technical and management education and to align the educational offerings with the evolving

Why the AICTE brought undergraduate management education under its ambit



needs of industry and society. This decision will also make institutions offering these programmes eligible for government funding, grants, scholarships and other forms of financial support that will enable them to invest in infrastructure development, faculty training, research facilities, and student welfare initiatives, all of which will benefit the entire academic community. In the coming academic year, BBA/BCA institutions will be given approval on 'as-is-where-is basis'. The AICTE will work with them over the next two to three years to improve the quality of their programmes by prescribing model curriculum of international standards, quality faculty development training programmes, quality improvement scheme, scholarships, and so on.

Benefits
The decision to bring institutions offering undergraduate management courses under the AICTE umbrella is significant, as the regulatory framework includes

guidelines for faculty qualifications, infrastructure requirements, teaching methodologies, and assessment processes. This will help the Institutions maintain the quality and credibility of their programmes, enhance their national and international accreditation and recognition, improve their reputation and increase the credibility of the degrees awarded, thereby facilitating academic mobility and career opportunities for students. Once under the AICTE's purview, these institutions will be regulated, monitored, and standardised and the guidelines and procedures will reduce administrative burden and promote transparency and accountability in the education sector, preventing the proliferation of substandard institutions and ensuring adherence to regulatory guidelines. This ensures that the interests of students are safeguarded and the credibility of programmes is maintained. Moreover, the AICTE, which fosters closer collaboration between academia

and industry, will ensure that students of BBA/BMS and BCA gain practical exposure to real-world challenges, industry trends, and best practices, which will enhance their employability and readiness to join the workforce. Another major factor to bring the institutions offering undergraduate management courses under the AICTE is to ensure skill development opportunities for the students. Also, the AICTE takes measures to promote the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country, will foster a culture of innovation and creativity in the institutions by providing support for research initiatives, incubation centres, and start-up initiatives. It will also empower UG Management graduates to explore new ideas, develop critical thinking skills, and pursue entrepreneurial ventures, so that they contribute to economic growth and societal development.

The writer is the Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).



OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I am in Class 11 (English, Legal Studies, Political Science, History and Economics). I am preparing for CLAT but not sure about pursuing law. What are my other options? Purvi

Dear Purvi,
You could consider a B.A. (Hons) in Political Science, History, or Economics to explore careers in academia, research, public policy, or international relations. Journalism and Mass Communication, Public Administration and Governance, International Relations and Diplomacy, Economics and Development Studies, Business Studies or Management, Social Work or Psychology, Environmental Studies or Sustainable Development, Public Relations or Advertising are other options. For Public Relations and careers in marketing, branding, and corporate communications you will need strong communication skills. Before you sign up for a course, consider your core interests, strengths, and long-term goals. Research the fields thoroughly understand the scope and job prospects, and make an informed choice.

I have a degree in Mechanical Engineering

SAVE THE DATE

■ **Logo design contest**
Maker Bhavan Foundation (MBF), a US-based charitable organisation aiming to modernise STEM education in India, has launched a logo design contest for the Vishwakarma Awards for Engineering Innovation. The winning entry will receive a

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

and am working for a private company. I had a chance to explore the Supply Chain and I now want to get into that domain. How do I go about this? Vignesh

Dear Vignesh.
Consider enrolling in online certifications in Supply Chain Management across platforms like Coursera, edX, or LinkedIn Learning. Learn the fundamentals including logistics, procurement, inventory management, demand forecasting, and distribution. Familiarise yourself with the key concepts and industry best practices. Identify transferable skills from your mechanical engineering background that apply to supply chain roles, such as problem-solving, analytical skills, project management, and attention to detail. Look for opportunities to get exposure to supply chain-related tasks. Assist the supply chain team or get involved in cross-functional projects. Depending on your career goals, explore pursuing a Master's degree or specialised programmes in Supply Chain Management. Connect with professionals in the field. Join industry forums, and attend networking events. Tailor your resume to highlight your transferable, relevant skills and experience related to supply chain tasks

prize of ₹10,000. **Who can participate:** All Engineering students across India **Last Date:** March 13 <https://bitly.ws/3dQ4u>

■ **Online programmes in hospitality**
Les Roches has launched an online academy with Digital Certification programmes specifically tailored for the

or projects. Look for positions that allow you to transition into supply chain function roles like logistics coordination, inventory management, procurement, or supply chain analysis. Be open to learning new concepts, technologies, and industry-specific tools.

I am in Class 10 and plan to do B.A. Economics. Is it necessary to take Maths along with Business Studies, Accountancy and Economics in Class 11? Karthyayini

Dear Karthyayini,
Maths as a subject in Classes 11-12 is not mandatory to pursue B.A. Economics. However, a strong foundation in Maths can be beneficial. Economics, at the university level, involves quantitative analysis, statistical methods, calculus, algebra, and mathematical models to understand economic theories, data analysis, and econometrics. It will enhance your analytical skills, problem-solving abilities, and quantitative reasoning, which can be advantageous in economics-related studies and careers. Check the specific admission requirements of the universities that you are interested in to see if Maths is a compulsory subject.

I completed my B.Sc. (Life

Indian market. These courses are Certified Hospitality Finance Analyst; Sustainability Specialist; Certified Digital Marketer; Certified Maître D. <https://bitly.ws/3eDCZ>

■ **MBA applications open**
NMIMS' Pravin Dalal School of Entrepreneurship and Family Business Management has opened admissions for its MBA programmes in Family

Sciences) in 2019 and did my B.Ed in 2023. I have enrolled for M.A. Anthropology from IGNOU. I am thinking of doing M.A. Psychology next year. Is this a good idea? Jyot

Dear Jyot,
Doing an M.A. in Psychology after completing your M.A. in Anthropology is a personal decision. Does it align with your long-term career goals and interests? Does pursuing another Master's contribute to your personal and intellectual growth or overall academic enrichment? Are you doing this for the sake of adding another degree or because you are interested in the field? How will this course complement your previous degrees? Do you think it balances your existing qualifications and enhances your current skill set? Assess the time, effort, and financial implications of pursuing another Master's degree. Ensure that it aligns with your professional aspirations and doesn't become redundant or unnecessary. I would also suggest that you get a career profiling done to identify your personality and career path so that the courses that you engage in are connected and have relevance to your final vision. **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

Business, Entrepreneurship and Family Business Management, Entrepreneurship, Women Entrepreneurship Programme and and BBA in Marketing Management. **Eligibility:** A Bachelor's degree in any discipline from a recognised university with minimum 50% aggregate. **Deadline:** Up to March 31, depending on the programme. <https://bitly.ws/3eDE4>

Global advantage

International exposure gives hospitality students a broad perspective and a competitive edge

Giovanni Odaglia

Hospitality is a global industry, catering to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and traditions. In today's interconnected world, international exposure has become a crucial aspect of hospitality education, providing students with valuable experiences and skills that go beyond traditional classroom learning such as:

Cultural exposure

Experiencing international environments allows students to encounter diverse cultures and traditions and develop a deeper appreciation and sensitivity towards different cultures. Engaging with individuals from various origins facilitates the cultivation of a global perspective, a cru-

cial attribute in the hospitality industry, where guests from all corners of the globe converge.

Language proficiency

Being able to communicate effectively with guests in their native language can lead to enhanced guest experiences. International exposure gives students the opportunity to learn and practise different languages, making them more sought-after and versatile in the competitive global job market.

Adaptability and flexibility

Working or studying abroad challenges students to adapt to new environments, customs, and ways of life. These experiences instill in them the virtues of flexibility and open-mindedness, which hold immense value in an ever-evolving industry like

hospitality.

Networking

Building a global network of contacts is beneficial for future career prospects. Through international exposure, students can forge connections with industry experts and potential employers across the globe, unlocking access to thrilling job prospects.

Communication skills

Effective communication serves as the foundation of the hospitality industry. International exposure enriches students' cross-cultural communication abilities, empowering them to engage with individuals from various backgrounds, comprehend their requirements, and deliver personalised service.

Best practices

Experiencing hospitality



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education in different countries exposes students to diverse approaches in hospitality management and service standards. This enables them to acquire valuable insights into various best practices, operational models, and service excellence concepts.

Hands-on experience

Many hospitality programmes offer internships and practical training opportunities as part of their international exposure initiatives. Through such hands-on experiences, students have the chance to work in real-world hospi-

talidity settings, applying theoretical knowledge and gaining valuable insights from seasoned professionals in the field.

Global prospects

In a globally competitive job market, employers value candidates with a di-

verse cultural background and international experience. Such students are more likely to have a competitive edge over others and be able to secure opportunities for international placements and career growth.

Leadership skills

Working in multicultural environments challenges students to develop leadership and teamwork skills. Managing diverse teams requires strong leadership capabilities and a high level of emotional intelligence, attributes that are honed through international exposure.

Personal growth

Studying abroad for hospitality education pushes students outside their comfort zone, promoting personal growth, independence, and self-confidence. Navigating unfamiliar territory helps them mature both personally and professionally.

International exposure plays a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded and competent professionals in an industry that thrives on cultural diversity and global interconnectedness. Today, hospitality education with an international focus is not just an option but a necessity for those seeking to excel in this dynamic field.

The writer is Director of Operations and Student Affairs at Les Roches Crans-Montana.

Learn to unlearn

A person with a beginner's mind is genuinely attentive and intrigued by multiple potentialities.



THINK
Aruna Sankaranarayanan

Though the idea of babies being born with a "tabula rasa", or blank slate, has been discredited by psychological research, this construct – that was championed by philosopher John Locke – resonates with the Zen concept of *shoshin* or beginner's mind and holds value for learners of all ages. Even as we prize knowledge and expertise, every person, no matter how educated or erudite they may be, can benefit from cultivating *shoshin*. Like many Zen aphorisms, the idea of a beginner's mind is also paradoxical.

"In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities but, in the expert's mind, there are few," writes Zen master Shunryu Suzuki, in his book, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. It is this openness to various options and alternative pathways that characterises the beginner's mind. In their book, *Teaching with Compassion*, sociologists Peter Kaufman and Janine Schipper aver that a beginner's mind embodies a "child-like" curiosity that is "primed for exploration and wonder". Instead of being hemmed in by a "right" manner of conceptualising, planning or proceeding, a beginner's mind is genuinely attentive and intrigued by multiple potentialities.

As cognitive neuroscientist, Christian Jarrett, points out in an article on

the web magazine *Psyche*, expertise is not an unalloyed blessing, as it is often accompanied by dogmatism and hubris. The history of Science is replete with stories of theories that are now well-established but were either ignored or lampooned by so-called experts when they were first espoused. Galileo, Wegener, Tesla and Chandrasekhar are only a few examples of individuals who championed ideas that were deemed ridiculous by authorities in their respective fields but were later proven correct. Jarrett points out that "intellectual hubris" is not limited to scientific experts. In one study, college graduates overestimated their knowledge related to their fields vis-a-vis a test that actually tested their understanding.

Action points

Those who are intellectually humble, know more, possibly because they are open to learning and are not as fixed in their views. So, how can you cultivate and maintain a beginner's mind? Jarrett offers the following tips. Most people tend to overestimate their own knowledge on varied topics from how a camera works to what factors precipitated the last recession. However, if we try to explain issues or topics to ourselves or somebody else, we may realise the lacunae in our understanding.

Next, we may play devil's advocate with ourselves. As humans, we tend to suffer from the fallacy of "confirmation bias," wherein we "seek out information" that corroborates our views and beliefs while ignoring or

dismissing contradictory evidence. Jarrett exhorts us to acknowledge this tendency. Then, to counteract it, he coaxes us to ferret out "information and perspectives" that might oppose our views.

You may also cultivate a growth mindset that believes that people's intelligence, including your own, can be changed with experience. According to Jarrett, those who espouse intellectual humility also tend to have a growth mindset. In contrast, those with a fixed mindset think that intelligence is largely determined by your genetic endowment. Those with a growth mindset do not necessarily feel diminished when fractures in their understanding are revealed because their belief that they can learn and fill in the chinks. But those with a fixed mindset see weaknesses in their argument as a threat to their intelligence and possibly their identities as well.

Inject awe experiences into your life, recommends Jarrett. Whether it's admiring the variegated vibrancy of fish in a large aquarium or staring at a star-studded night sky or marvelling at the seamless synchronicity of a dance ballet, experiences of wonder tend to make people more humble and open. Finally, Jarrett reminds us that as *shoshin* tends to vary across situations, we cannot assume that we approach all facets of life with a beginner's mind. Rather, we need to remind ourselves periodically to remain humble and open and gaze at the world with a childlike curiosity.

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



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Words that matter

Tips to help students ace the Verbal section of the GMAT exam



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the key is approach it with a logical mindset. Students not only need to develop strong reading comprehension skills but also should familiarise themselves with English grammar rules and critical thinking abilities apart from developing time management techniques. Here are a few tips with help GMAT aspirants master the Verbal section:

Deconstruct the sentence: Complex sentences with advanced vocabulary

can be challenging to understand. The solution is to break them down into smaller parts. Analyse the subject, modifiers, verb relationships, tenses and other relevant elements carefully. This will help reveal the sentence structure and arrive at the correct answer. Constant

practise will strengthen your understanding of complicated sentences and reflect in your performance as well.

Read, understand, and infer: Approach the sentences like a mathematical equation. Each word and phrase in a sentence can be viewed as a

variable; decode the transactions between them to fully comprehend the meaning. You can increase your capacity to perceive and interpret verbal communication more precisely by recognising the links and transactions within the sentence and applying simple rules to unravel the meaning effectively.

Understand wrong answers: To become a proficient reader and communicator, pay attention to the sequence in which words appear in a sentence and the types of words used. You can also search for key phrases or words that indicate a shift in meaning. This will improve your ability to infer the intended meaning and interpret it accurately.

The write is Programme Director, IMS International

In many tongues

Knowledge of more than one language opens up a plethora of job opportunities

Bhuvana Shridhar

The language translation and localisation industry in India has been growing rapidly. According to an article on the website Translate Day, the translation services market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 2.07% by 2028. Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to grow by 4% by 2032.

There is an inherent demand for Indian and foreign language translators, both in the private and public sector. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the translation business is expected to grow by 20% till 2029. But today we are losing out on crores of business, primarily because of the lack of translators who have little knowledge of language computing.

With the growth of digitisation, more people in India want to read content in regional languages, be it for consumer durables or any other industry. Almost 90% of Internet users prefer to consume regional content before making online purchases. Even product labels have instructions written in regional languages.

Despite the entry of AI in the field, there is a need for human translators. Machines cannot capture the nuances of language and the culture it represents. In domains like Healthcare, bad translations can have serious consequences.

Educational requirements

A degree or diploma in a regional language along with qualifications in software programming or Information Technology will be of value. Those with university degrees in language translations may stand a better chance in getting the right jobs.

Ahmedabad University offers a Post Graduate Diploma in Translation and Creative Writing.

Delhi University seeks to integrate programmes in technology with courses in modern regional languages. The added advantage here is that of case study and interaction with experienced translators as well as suitable placements in the appropriate industry.

Careers

Content creators: Many IT service start-ups, consumer durable industries, and consulting groups require content creators to write iregional languages.

Product managers: Product managers oversee and avoid the inherent risk associated with translation initiatives while enhancing the product value. They have to support multilingual projects, ensure accuracy of the translations and double-check the entire document.

Translators: The demand for translators cuts across industries such as e-commerce, travel and tourism, manufacturing,

healthcare, law banking, finance, and education. All have critical content that needs high-quality translation.

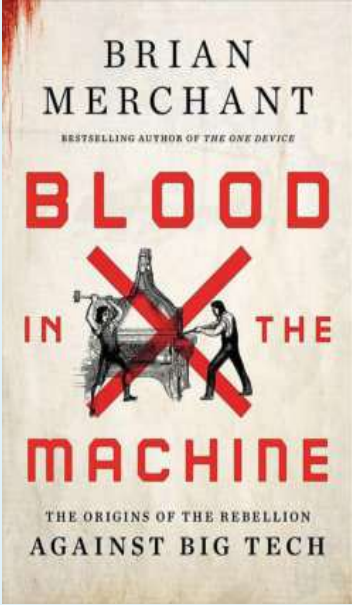
Desktop publishing (DTP): In a translation context, DTP comes after the translation, editing and proofreading stage. This involves the formatting of the localised text in order to match the source text. Most companies offer specialised training and there are many career openings available for DTP operators.

Foreign language translators: This section has always been in high demand. Openings are also available as teachers to provide instruction on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, cultural context, and language-specific nuances.

Proofreaders: Content in regional languages needs to be checked before it is published. There are many job opportunities for bilingual proofreaders.

While there are plenty of opportunities for freshers, those already in the field should upskill themselves to enhance their output and to grow both professionally and personally.

ON THE SHELF



■ Blood in the Machine: The Origins of Rebellion Against Big Tech

The most urgent story in modern tech begins not in Silicon Valley but 200 years ago in rural England, when workers known as the Luddites rose up rather than starve at the hands of factory owners who were using automated machines to erase their livelihoods. The Luddites organised guerrilla raids to smash those machines — on punishment of death — and won the support of Lord Byron, enraged the Prince Regent, and inspired the birth of science fiction. This all-but-forgotten class struggle brought 19th century England to its knees.

Today, technology imperils millions of jobs, robots are crowding factory floors, and Artificial Intelligence will soon pervade every aspect of our economy. How will this change the way we live? And what can we do about it? Brian Merchant intertwines a lucid examination of our current age with the story of the Luddites, showing how automation changed our world and is shaping our future.

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