

EDUCATIONPLUS

GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the\_hindu instagram.com/the\_hindu

John J. Kennedy

Academic brilliance was once defined by the depth of scholarship, rigorous institutional processes, and a culture of inquiry nurtured by universities. Today, the focus has shifted to metrics, badges, and rankings. Institutions showcase it, scholars highlight it, and stakeholders treat it as a seal of quality. Yet, as with all that glitters, one must ask: what lies beneath?

Today, Stanford is gaining recognition, alongside THE and QS rankings, despite the inherent flaws in all three. The Stanford ranking, for instance, seeks to identify the top 2% scientists in various disciplines based on a composite indicator. This includes bibliometric indicators such as total citations, h-index, co-authorship-adjusted metrics, and citations to papers in different authorship positions. While it appears scientific and data-driven, the exercise is not without flaws.

For one, it depends entirely on Scopus data, a commercial database that does not cover all disciplines equally. Humanities and some Social Sciences are grossly under-represented, leaving a large swath of global academia invisible in the analysis. Moreover, the focus on citation-based metrics incentivises quantity over quality. A well-written, widely-cited review paper can push a researcher up the ranks, while a game-



changing monograph in philosophy may not even register. What makes it even more problematic is the blind application of these rankings by institutions. Without context, nuance, or disciplinary sensitivity, they are turned into marketing tools. It is less about a commitment to excellence and more about optics and prestige. The ranking becomes currency; a transactional marker to attract funding, students, and media attention.

**Indian context**  
In India, the situation is more troubling. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has come under intense

scrutiny after the recent revelation of a university in Andhra Pradesh allegedly paying crores to secure an A++ grade. Shockingly, nearly 20% of NAAC assessors were later removed due to various irregularities. The demand for a comprehensive probe into the assessments conducted by these discredited evaluators is reasonable and urgent. In recent years, many institutions have managed to secure top grades, which many argue is inconsistent with the ground reality of poor infrastructure, faculty shortages, and abysmal student outcomes. This raises a troubling question: Have we reduced institutional quality to a game of strategic

networking, financial leverage, and performative documentation?

One cannot ignore the systemic pressures at play. The increasing corporatisation of academia has introduced market logic into the university system. As public funding shrinks, universities – especially private ones – are forced to rely on student fees and external rankings to remain afloat. This leads to a dangerous feedback loop. To attract students, institutions ease academic regulations, reduce penalties for indiscipline, and adopt student-centric policies that often border on appeasement. Faculty, burdened with teaching, administrative tasks, and

publication requirements, face burnout. In such an environment, rankings become not just desirable but necessary. They are wielded as shields in an ever-intensifying battle for survival. Institutions chase Scopus-indexed journals to meet regulatory demands, not for the love of scholarship. Researchers pay exorbitant fees to get published and, when that fails, some resort to unethical practices, only for their papers to be retracted later.

**Flawed model**  
In this matrix of manipulation, it is easy to blame the institutions. But the deeper malaise lies in the very education model we have embraced: one that equates

visibility with value, metrics with meaning, and reputation with reality. Awards, too, have not been spared. Today, one can pay a tidy sum and receive an “Excellence in Research” award in a foreign country with a sightseeing tour and conference pass thrown in. These packages are marketed as academic opportunities but are, in truth, commodified experiences engineered to inflate CVs. We must ask: did our finest institutions of yesteryear depend on such scaffolding?

The situation may seem bleak, but not hopeless. To reverse the tide, we need to recalibrate our priorities. First, we must advocate for more context-sensitive and peer-reviewed models of assessment that go beyond metrics. Second, public funding for education must be restored and enhanced. The commodification of education is not an inevitable outcome; it is the result of deliberate policy choices. Third, academia must reclaim its soul. Universities are not businesses, and education is not a product. Rankings can be tools, but they must not become our tyrants. The rot will deepen until we resist the seduction of easy prestige and short-term gains. It's time to stop asking how to climb the ranks and start asking how to make learning meaningful again.

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

**National Overseas Scholarship Scheme for ST Students**  
An opportunity offered by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.  
**Eligibility:** Students from the Scheduled Tribes (ST) communities who hold a Master's, Ph.D. or postdoctoral degree, have secured 55% or equivalent in the previous qualifying examination and have an annual income of less than ₹600,000.  
**Rewards:** \$15,400 a year and other benefits.  
**Application:** Online  
**Deadline:** June 30  
www.b4s.in/edge/NOSF1

**IDFC FIRST Bank MBA Scholarship**  
A need-based scholarship from IDFC FIRST Bank.  
**Eligibility:** Indian students enrolled in the first year of a two-year, full-time MBA

**FAEA Scholarship**  
Offered by the Foundation for Academic Excellence and Access (FAEA).  
**Eligibility:** Students residing within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) who scored overall 85% or above in Class 10 Board exams in 2025 and have secured admission for Class 11 in any stream in MMR with an annual family income of ₹320,000 or below.  
**Rewards:** Tuition fee, hostel/mess charges, and allowances.  
**Application:** Online  
**Deadline:** June 30  
www.b4s.in/edge/FAEA2

Courtesy: Buddy4study

**INCUBATE 2025**

Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry, and the IIT-Bombay have launched INCUBATE 2025, a Med-Tech hackathon to inspire medical and engineering students to innovate solutions for pressing healthcare challenges.

**Eligibility:** Students pursuing MBBS, BDS, B.Sc. Nursing, B.Tech, B.E. or equivalent in engineering. Students pursuing B.Sc., M.Sc. or Integrated Masters in any discipline of Natural or Life Sciences can be team members along with medical or engineering students.

More details at [www.incubate2025.in](http://www.incubate2025.in)

Develop practical skills

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

from Delhi. What are my career options? Moni

Dear Moni,  
Delhi has a vibrant art scene, with numerous galleries, museums, and art institutions. Leverage the city's resources and opportunities to build your career. Build a strong portfolio that showcases your work and connect with artists, curators, and other professionals in the art world. You could be a professional artist, creating and selling your work through solo and group shows, art fairs, online platforms or via commissions for private clients or businesses. You could be an art educator and teach at universities and art colleges, private art schools and workshops, community art programmes, or offer private art lessons. Another option is being gallery curator/ manager in art galleries, museums, or cultural institutions, organising exhibitions, managing collections, working with artists and selling and marketing art. Or be an art critic/ writer for art magazines and journals, newspapers and online publications, blogs and websites. This requires strong writing and analytical skills. An art restorer/ conservator is another option. You could also explore creative industries such as set design, illustration, graphic design, animation, textile design, fashion design, interior design or digital art and media. Or work with community organisations to create art projects using art as a tool for social change and engagement.

**practical skills are low. I attempted the UPSC twice but did not clear it. I am interested in journalism, but in light of the drastic changes in the job market, I don't know if it is a good option. Priya**

Dear Priya,  
Your M.A. in Modern History provides a strong background in research, analysis, and critical thinking. As far as journalism goes, strong research and writing skills are essential. Opportunities in digital journalism, content creation, multimedia storytelling (video, audio, infographics), social media management, content creation, data journalism and media analysis are good options. Build a portfolio and network with journalists and media professionals on LinkedIn. Create multimedia content related to history or current events. Consider specialised journalism, such as data, historical, or political journalism. You also have opportunities academia and research, in think tanks, and policy analysis. Consider pursuing a Ph.D. Explore government roles related to cultural heritage, archives, or policy research. Look into state government positions, as those may have less competition than the UPSC. Develop practical skills such as digital and communication skills. Learn digital tools and software relevant to your chosen field, like data analysis, digital marketing, and multimedia production. Practise public speaking and presentation skills and improve your writing and editing skills.

**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



OFF THE EDGE  
Nandini Raman

**I have completed B.Com and am working as an analyst for Deloitte. I have a visual impairment. I saw a course on soft skills and corporate training from an institute called ICBI, which is accredited by SQA. It is expensive, but I attended an online session that was engaging and interesting. On completion, they say, I can apply for a full-time role as a corporate trainer in different companies, and ICBI will also refer me to companies. But no one seems to know about this course. I do not want to leave my current job to study. So I am also looking at online MBA options. What should I do? Shiva**

Dear Shiva,  
While the course sounds interesting and the SQA accreditation adds credibility, the expense and not many people knowing about it is not okay. Try to find trainers who have passed out of this academy and verify the job placement claims. Do not leave your current job till you are convinced about the course, the certification and the placements.

An online MBA offers the flexibility to study while working and will enhance your business knowledge and management skills. But it will need self-discipline and time management, and may not provide the same networking opportunities as a traditional MBA. Look up accredited universities that have online MBAs and focus on programmes that offer specialisations relevant to your interests and with strong career services and alumni networks.

Try leveraging your Deloitte experience and seek opportunities for growth within the company by

exploring internal mobility options. Identify the transferable skills that you have gained from your B.Com and Deloitte experience and highlight them in your resume and job applications.

**I am in Class 10 in a government school. I am not interested in academics, but I do not know how to choose my career. What can I do other than get a degree or look at a career in government service? Prasanna**

Dear Prasanna,  
Your feelings are perfectly normal. First, identify the activities you enjoy. What are you good at? Do you prefer working with your hands or being creative or solving practical problems? Identify your skills and strengths. Consider skill development and vocational training across automotive repair, electrical work, plumbing, welding, carpentry or consider programmes in graphic design, photography, culinary arts, cybersecurity and network administration if you are interested in Information Technology. Look up courses in ITIs that provide practical skills and hands-on training via short-term courses in various technical trades. Apprenticeships allow you to learn a trade while working under the guidance of experienced professionals. Community Colleges and Polytechnics offer diploma courses that lead to practical careers. Focus on developing practical skills that are in demand in the job market.

**I am doing my M.A. in Modern History. I graduated during the pandemic, and my**

**I am doing M.FA Painting**

Foster an intellectual spirit

By tightening norms on Ph.D. supervision, are we nurturing research potential or fencing it in?

Bhupendar Nandlal Kesur

Academic research in India is once again at a pivotal crossroads. In a recent directive, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has stipulated that research supervisors for Ph.D. candidates must belong to institutions with recognised postgraduate research centres. This move, intended to ensure quality control and institutional accountability, comes at a time when the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is advocating the democratisation and decentralisation of research – starting right from undergraduate programmes. The apparent contradiction between these two directions raises fundamental questions about the future of research in India.

**Quality vs. accessibility**  
On the surface, the UGC's intention seems well-founded. Research is a rigorous activity demanding access to institutional infrastructure, peer support, and ethical oversight. Restricting supervisors to PG research centres ensures that minimum academic standards are upheld. However, this measure inadvertently sidelines a vast cohort of capable researchers and teachers from UG colleges, who may possess strong academic credentials, extensive research experience, and proven track records but are now deemed ineligible solely due to institutional affiliation. The policy runs the risk of converting what should be an intellectually inclusive process into an exclusive club, centred around a few institutions with “recognised” status. Is research potential a property of an



institution or an individual?

**Individual merit**  
This brings us to a crucial philosophical and pedagogical question: Should research supervision be institution-centric or individual-centric? There are several instances where professors in non-research PG colleges have published in high-impact journals, received fellowships, and mentored scholars informally with great success. By denying these individuals the ability to formally guide Ph.D. students, the system fails to recognise merit and performance outside bureaucratic boundaries. Ironically, NEP 2020 emphasises promoting research from the undergraduate level, allowing students to engage in high-level inquiry and innovation as early as the fourth year. How, then, do we reconcile this vision with a restrictive policy that limits who can guide future researchers?

**Repercussions**  
The implications of this policy could be far-reaching. First, it may lead to overcrowding of researchers under a few supervisors in PG research

centres, reducing the quality of mentorship. Second, it may demoralise qualified teachers in UG institutions who are eager to contribute to national knowledge production. Third, it creates a two-tiered system; those who are “research-worthy” and those who are not, based not on talent but institutional status. Additionally, the assumption that only PG centres have the necessary infrastructure is increasingly outdated in the digital age. With open-access journals, virtual laboratories, collaborative tools, and global research networks, much of the academic work today transcends physical campuses.

**Need for balance**  
A more nuanced framework is urgently needed: one that upholds academic quality while actively nurturing individual research talent. To begin with, merit-based accreditation should be introduced, allowing experienced faculty from non-PG research centres to independently apply to be Ph.D. guides based on academic credentials, such as publication records, citation indices, or leadership in funded research projects. In place of

blanket bans on entire categories of institutions, regular institutional audits should be conducted to assess and certify research readiness in undergraduate colleges, ensuring that deserving institutions are not unfairly excluded. Additionally, collaborative mentorship models could be adopted, allowing for joint supervision where a researcher has a primary guide from a UG institution and a co-guide from a PG research centre, thereby encouraging mentorship diversity and inter-institutional learning. Policies must also be realigned with the NEP 2020's research-first vision, which calls for building research mentorship capacity across the academic spectrum – including UG colleges – instead of restricting it. Finally, investment in digital infrastructure is essential, enabling equitable access to research databases, tools, and collaborative platforms for all accredited institutions, thereby decentralising research power and making knowledge creation more inclusive.

Research is not the privilege of a few but the responsibility of all in the academic ecosystem. UGC's commitment to quality is laudable, but it must not come at the cost of inclusivity and innovation. As India moves towards becoming a global knowledge hub, it is essential to ensure that the structures we build empower every capable mind, not just the ones housed in designated research centres. The strength of a nation's research culture lies not in institutional labels but in the intellectual spirit it chooses to nurture.

The writer is a Professor and Head of the Department of English, M. J. College, Jalgaon, Maharashtra





WIDE ANGLE  
Albert P' Rayan

Every year, thousands of Indian students pursue higher education abroad, with the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia being among the top choices. According to data from the Ministry of Education, the number of Indian students studying overseas increased by 52.2% over five years; from 586,337 in 2019 to 892,989 in 2023.

This is due to several factors: the perception of receiving a globally recognised, high-quality education at top-ranked universities; access to cutting-edge research facilities; improved career prospects; international exposure; better job opportunities and higher salaries; a superior quality of life; and relatively smoother immigration processes.

Studies indicate that over 75% of Indian students who study abroad intend to work and settle in their host countries, with only a small fraction planning to return to India. This suggests that such students have already considered critical questions such as:

What are the advantages of earning a degree from a foreign university? What career opportunities will it open up?

New questions

Now, with some foreign universities setting up campuses in India, aspiring students are beginning to ask a new set of questions: What are the benefits of earning a degree from an international university's Indian campus? Is it as valuable as studying at the main campus abroad? Will it offer the same academic experience and career prospects?

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 supports the establishment of independent campuses by foreign universities in India and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan recently announced that 15 international universities will set up campuses in the country during the current academic year.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has already issued Letters of Intent (LoI) to some institutions, including the University of Liverpool and to the University of Aberdeen to set up branch campuses in Bangalore and Mumbai respectively.

According to the specified guidelines, foreign universities seeking entry in-



# Booster or barrier?

Are foreign university campuses in India truly beneficial?

to India must rank among the top 500 globally, demonstrate subject-specific expertise, and be duly recognised in their home countries to offer academic and research programmes. They will have autonomy in designing their curriculum, managing admissions, setting fee structures and are author-

ised to award internationally recognised degrees. Foreign universities stand to gain significantly by entering the Indian education sector as they can expand their global footprint, enjoy academic and administrative autonomy, and offer international degrees within India. The presence of top-

ranked foreign university campuses in India is also expected to bring several advantages to the country. It can introduce world-class education; help raise domestic academic standards to global levels and promote knowledge exchange. Participation in conferences organised by these institutions can pro-

vide Indian scholars with valuable exposure and enriching learning experiences. Moreover, Indian students will be able to earn foreign degrees without going abroad, thereby helping retain talent within the country.

But one must also ask: who are the actual beneficiaries? Will these branch

campuses cater exclusively to the elite? Will academically gifted students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds have an opportunity to gain admission?

In a country where millions of young people struggle to access higher education – or are unable to pursue it due to financial constraints – this initiative risks neglecting local needs and priorities.

Motives

With regard to bringing world-class education to India, any foreign university setting up a campus here is primarily driven by monetary interests, and the focus is likely to be on profit rather than academic excellence. This opens the door to the commercialisation of education, reducing it to a commodity rather than upholding it as a service.

Foreign university branch campuses in India risk becoming symbols of elitism rather than instruments of equality or social justice. A truly vibrant campus is one that embraces equality, upholds social justice, and celebrates diversity and inclusiveness.

On a typical Indian campus, students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds come together, interact, and learn

from one another. This environment helps everyone become sensitive to the needs of one another and empathetic. A foreign campus in India is unlikely to foster or reflect this kind of inclusive environment. Introducing foreign university campuses should lead to reforms in the education sector, not widen inequality.

It is misguided to claim that graduates from foreign university campuses in India will help reduce brain drain. On the contrary, a degree from a foreign university can serve as a stepping stone and increase the chances for those who aspire to work abroad.

If the purpose of inviting foreign universities to set up branch campuses in India is to bring world-class education, develop global citizens, and transform the country into a “Viksit Bharat” (Developed India) by 2047, the focus must be on addressing local needs, particularly by enabling economically and socially disadvantaged groups to access higher education and by improving the overall quality of education. That is what will lead to true transformation. Let us not forget: all that glitters is not gold.

The writer is an ELT resource person and education columnist. Email: rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

GREEN INFLUENCER

## A voice for Nature

The actor and producer on how she became an advocate for the environment



Dia Mirza

Acting gave me a voice, a platform, and a reach that I deeply value. But I've always felt a strong connection with Nature; it's been part of my upbringing and identity. Growing up in a verdant city like Hyderabad amid abundant biodiversity drove me to seek a deep connection with Nature wherever I go.

As I became increasingly aware of the urgent environmental crises around us, I realised that visibility comes with responsibility. Gradually, I began engaging more intentionally with this mission, partnering with organisations, supporting campaigns, and eventually becoming a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Environment Programme. My advocacy is now as integral to my life as my work in cinema.

Starting point

As far as I can remember, the defining moment that led me here was a trip to the Pench forest in Madhya Pradesh during the ‘Save Our Tigers’ campaign. Walking through those ancient forests, hearing stories of vanishing species, and witnessing a tigress on a hunt gave me a profound sense of responsibility. I also remember the shock of seeing mounds of plastic waste littering the Himalayas while shooting *Ganga: The Soul of India*. That prompted me to address plastic pollution in my

own life. I have since given up using single-use plastics.

Working in this field, I draw immense fulfillment from the knowledge that one's voice can catalyse awareness, shift perceptions, and inspire change. Whether it's encouraging single-use plastic bans, promoting sustainable fashion, or speaking to school children about climate action, the ripple effect is real. Bringing together scientists, activists, policymakers, and citizens around shared goals feels powerful and hopeful. Nature has an incredible capacity to heal, and helping to amplify that message is a privilege.

People connect through stories, not statistics, so I share messages with authenticity and clarity, often rooted in personal experience. Collaboration has been key; working with scientists, NGOs, governments, and artists requires openness and mutual respect. Using media and digital platforms responsibly also helps expand reach and engagement.

Apathy and misinformation

But one recurring challenge is navigating apathy or misinformation. Environmental issues can feel overwhelming, and many feel disconnected from them. I try to address this by focusing on accessible, solution-oriented messaging. Another challenge is balancing advocacy work with the demands of my career

and motherhood, but I've learned that every small action counts. It's not about being perfect, but being committed. Even micro actions can have macro impacts.

Looking ahead, I want to deepen my engagement with regenerative practices and community-led conservation. I believe there's an urgent need to make climate education mainstream, especially among young people. It has been rewarding to be involved in programs like Kids for Tigers and to voice educational characters, such as the animatronic elephant ‘Ellie,’ in a PETA India campaign. This is a space I hope to work more actively in.

In the eventful journey so far, many people and movements have inspired me. The work of Jane Goodall has especially been close to my heart. Closer home, Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh Jhala, Bittu Sahgal, and the late Dhruvajyoti Ghosh have left a lasting impact. Movements like Chipko and Fridays for Future have shown how powerful grassroots action can be. I've also learned so much from indigenous communities, who live in harmony with Nature.

Looking back, there have been so many memorable moments. At a beach clean-up initiative in Mumbai, a little girl came up to me with a piece of plastic and said, “I'm doing this because I want the turtles to come back.” Her clarity and innocence brought tears to my eyes. Children are watching us, learning from us; they're ready to lead, we just need to show them the way.

To all young people considering green careers, please know the planet needs you. Whether you're a scientist, artist, lawyer, entrepreneur, or engineer, every career can be green if it's driven by purpose. Don't wait for perfection; start wherever you are. Stay informed, stay curious, and never underestimate the power of community. Nature is resilient, and so are you.

Courtesy: WWF-India

The writer is a United Nations Environment Programme Goodwill Ambassador and UN Secretary-General's Advocate for Sustainable Development Goals.

Kamakshi Khurana  
Vishala Khurana

For a long time, music has been taught with performance as the primary goal. But times are changing, and so is the purpose of music in education. Today, music is more than just a talent to be showcased; it is a powerful life skill, a tool for mental well-being, and a way to enrich learning across disciplines. As students face increasing academic pressure and emotional challenges, music offers something deeply valuable: calm, creativity, and connection. It is time we rethink how music is taught, not just in music schools, but across India's mainstream educational systems.

Build life skills

Learning music doesn't always have to lead to a stage. While performing builds confidence, the process of engaging with music also builds essential life skills. Practising an instrument or learning to compose teaches patience, focus, and discipline. Listening deeply to music enhances emotional sensitivity and concentration. More importantly, it supports mental health. Research shows that music

Pulkit Sharma

Today, the ability to communicate across cultures is not just a valuable skill, but also a passport to opportunity. This is why learning Korean offers students a powerful advantage both academically and professionally. Here's why Korean is quickly becoming a smart language choice for students around the world.

**Gateway to global businesses:** South Korea is a global hub for technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship with companies such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai are shaping the future. By learning Korean, students position themselves for potential internships, job opportunities, and international collaborations with these companies. Proficiency in the language isn't just impressive on a resume. It is often the key to building meaningful relationships in Korean business culture.

**World-class education:** South Korea boasts some of Asia's top universities, known for cutting-

# Beats of change

It is time to rethink how music is taught not just in music schools but across mainstream educational systems



can reduce stress, improve mood, and even boost memory. By redefining music as a life skill, we shift the focus from competition to personal growth; an approach that makes it more accessible and meaningful.

Music education shouldn't begin and end in childhood, though it is vital to introduce music early when children are developing language, motor skills, and emotional awareness. Singing rhymes, using rhythm to learn numbers, and moving to music support brain development. But music also belongs in teenage

and adult education. In college, music can be a creative break from academic rigour and help students connect with themselves, find their voice, and express ideas that words cannot fully capture. Incorporating music into university life could be as simple as offering music appreciation electives, creating student-led bands or choirs, or using music in mindfulness and well-being programmes.

To make music a part of everyday learning, we need educators who understand its wide-reaching potential. Interdisciplin-

ary educators use music to explore connections between different fields such as how rhythm relates to Maths, or how songs reflect historical movements. They can collaborate with departments such as Psychology, Education, or even Management to bring fresh perspectives. For example, music can be used to explore group dynamics in leadership courses or to develop emotional intelligence in teacher training programmes. Such educators don't just teach music; they guide students to discover how it interacts with the world around them.

In higher education

India's colleges and universities are perfectly placed to lead this change. Higher education can offer students not just academic knowledge, but also tools for self-care, creativity and emotional growth, and music fits into this vision.

Introducing music into general curriculums could have a wide impact. Ima-

or Yonsei. Learning Korean enhances a student's ability to immerse themselves in this academic environment, both inside and outside the classroom.

**Cultural depth:** From the global K-pop phenomenon to award-winning Korean cinema and innovative fashion, Korean culture is shaping the global entertainment scene. Students who learn the language gain deeper insights into Korea's rich history, literature, and values. As language is not just vocabulary; it's a lens into how people think, live, and connect.

**Cognitive growth:** Korean challenges the brain in ways that few other languages do. With its unique alphabet (Hangul) and grammar structure, students develop new cognitive patterns, enhancing memory, focus, and problem-solving abilities. Learning Korean can also improve academic performance in other subjects by strengthening overall study habits and mental agility.

In the job market:

Whether one aspires to work in diplomacy, international relations, business, education, or the media, Korean language skills are in increasingly high demand. With South Korea being one of the world's top economies and a major player in global affairs, speaking Korean can be the edge that sets a student apart from the crowd.

**Building connections:** One of the most fulfilling aspects of learning the Korean language is forming authentic relationships. By learning Korean, students can connect with Korean-speaking peers, participate in exchanges, and build friendships that often lead to transformative experiences and a deeper appreciation for global diversity.

Students should consider learning Korean not just as a language, but as a life-changing tool. It opens doors to global experiences, academic excellence, and personal growth.

The writer is Assistant Professor, Korean Department of English and Foreign Languages at SRM University