Monday, January 26, 2026
CHENNAI

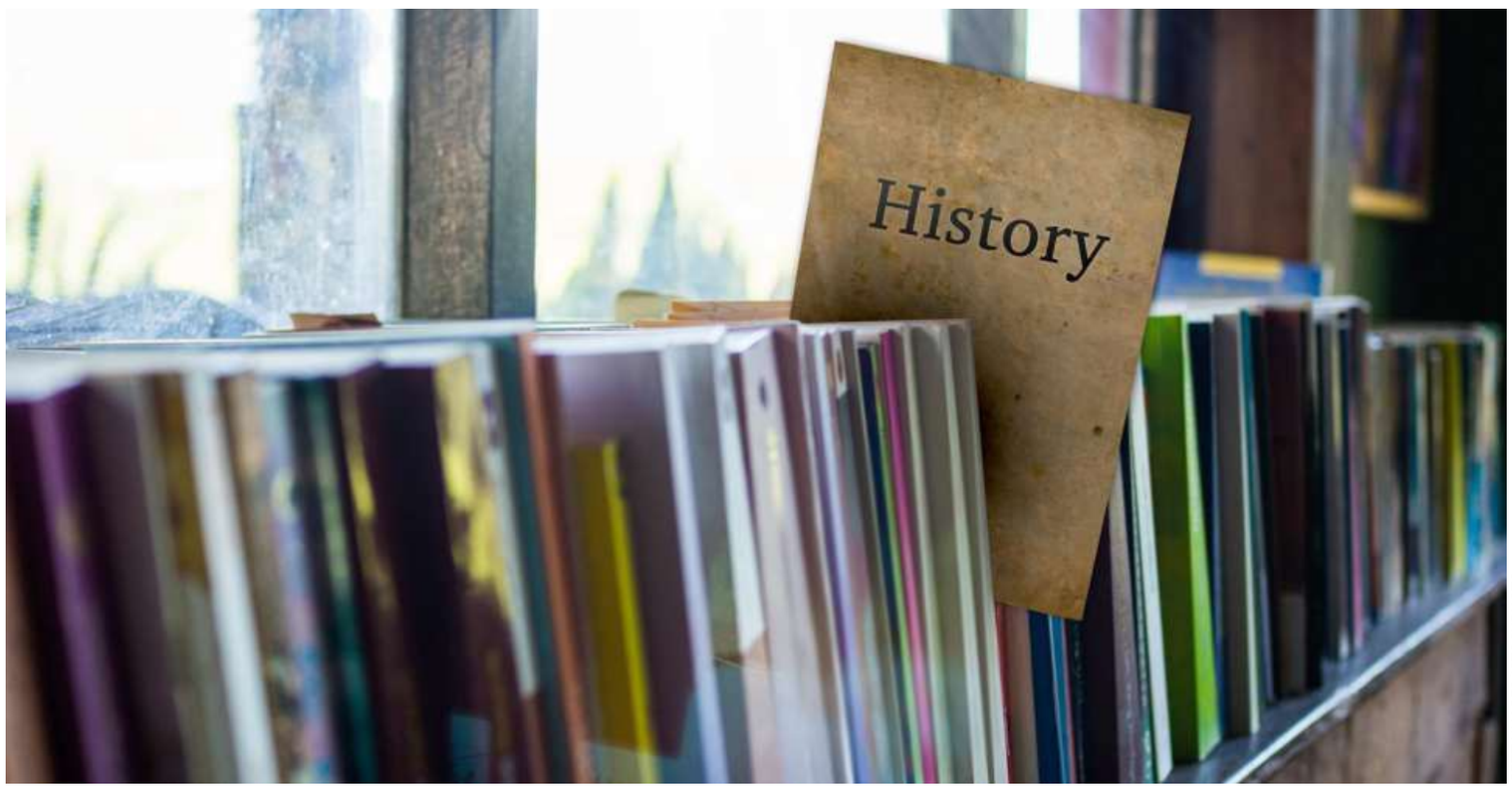
THE HINDU

EDUCATIONPLUS

GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

The present within our past

On India's 76th Republic Day, a look at how contemporary history makes its way into classrooms



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Meghaa Gupta

"What is history?" I asked a group of eighth graders.

"Things that happened in the past," one volunteered.

"And what are these things?" I probed.

"Empires", "Kings", "Wars", "Freedom Struggle" ...

The answers poured in. Answers I have heard in schools across the country while travelling as an author of a series of history books on Independent India. So, I ventured, "What about events that happened after Independence? Are they part of history too?" Some students nodded. Others looked unsure.

Moment of change

"For several decades, events after 1947 were considered too close to be included in school textbooks," says educationist Arvind Sardana, a member of the Social Science group at Eklavya, an NGO that develops and field tests innovative educational programmes. "This changed significantly in the 1980s through the Eklavya experiments and then in the 2000s through some state government initiatives."

A key shift came with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, which pushed for learning that was connected to the home and the community life of a child. Anita Rampal, who was closely involved with the NCF and was Chairperson of the Primary Textbook Teams, says, "It was a watershed because this was at the national level and so it had a different legitimacy. A lot of people who may have been engaging [with contemporary issues] at different places, in different times and different scales came together... Anything you're doing... Physics or Social Studies, unless a student can relate with it, interrogate it, try to observe and see connections with her experiences, it's not going to make sense. A learner is not going to be able to construct her knowledge, which is important to develop an understanding, and does not happen only by reading or repeating what information may be thrown at you."

However, Rampal notes that contemporary issues within the social and cultural context of learners are currently being consciously kept aside, especially those considered 'taboo', such as caste, gender, poverty or religious minorities. Even within the Social Sciences (where they do appear), there are major erasures and distortions in the syllabi and textbooks.

A scattered narrative

Setu Rehan – who heads the Social Science Department at Mind Tree School at Panjokhra, Ambala, Punjab – finds that discourses on contemporary history are spread across so many different subjects that they don't register as a distinctive theme. Events like the Partition and the Non-Aligned Movement, for example, fall into History. In Civics, students study the making of the Constitution, elections and so on, while events like the Green and Milk Revolutions appear in Geography as well as Economics. Moreover, such topics don't usually carry much weight in examinations, which further limits the attention given to them.

Pushpalata Pooranan – director of the Pushpalata Schools in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu – adds that even though the syllabus includes several contemporary themes, "there is very little continuity or context-setting. Instead, students encounter stand-alone topics, which don't facilitate deeper understanding."

A vital discourse

In practice, meaningful engagement with contemporary history depends largely on the initiative of individual schools and teachers. Pooranan considers such engagement essential and actively encourages devoting time and resources to it. This includes designing lessons in ways that contextualise the past with the present, recommending supplementary readers, encouraging newspaper reading, and having at least one period every week for reading and discussions.

A growing challenge confronting educators is the sheer volume of information on contemporary history available to students online, where valuable scholarship competes with a flood of skewed and fake narratives. In such a situation, it has become even more important for schools to engage with this history.

Initiatives such as the History for Children project at the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, alongside a growing body of postcolonial nonfiction for children, attempt to address this challenge by offering supplementary teaching resources. Historians Debarati Bagchi and Anwesha Sengupta, who worked on the History for Children project, describe their goal as creating space for questioning and helping children "doubt WhatsApp University knowledge and develop historical consciousness."

SCHOLARSHIPS

Azim Premji Scholarship
Offered by the Azim Premji Foundation.
Eligibility: Girls from disadvantaged backgrounds who passed Class 10 and 12 from a government school and are pursuing a UG degree or a diploma in a government or private institution.
Rewards: ₹30,000 a year
Application: Online
Deadline: January 31
www.b4s.in/edge/AZPS1

Shastra Deep-tech Excellence Fellowship
Offered by the Shastra Venture Capital.
Eligibility: Ph.D. or post-doctoral researchers or UG and PG students with proven research experience
Rewards: Up to $100,000
Application: Online
Deadline: January 31
www.b4s.in/edge/SDEX1

Imperial College London International Baccalaureate Excellence Scholarships
Offered by the Imperial College London, the U.K.
Eligibility: International students who have an IB diploma, and applying for a UG course in the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, or Imperial Business School.
Rewards: £5,000 a year
Application: Online
Deadline: April 24
www.b4s.in/edge/ILIB0

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

Build motivation

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

I completed a Master's in English Literature and cleared UGC-NET in 2022. While I want to pursue research, I lack the motivation and ideas to start. Pravitha

Dear Pravitha,

Identify why you are feeling stuck. Are you waiting for a perfect topic? It doesn't exit. Most researchers begin with a vague curiosity. Are you feeling disconnected from reading? Weeks of not engaging with academic texts can make starting again feel overwhelming and difficult. Are you directly trying to jump to a Ph.D. proposal? Start with micro-questions. Identify your 'micro-interests'. Which author or genre did you return to during your Master's?

Pick a direction from emerging research areas in English Literature today such as postcolonial and contemporary Indian writing such as Dalit literature, writings from the northeast, partition narratives, caste and gender intersections, Indian graphic novels, eco-criticism and climate literature, ecofeminism, social media storytelling, fan fiction studies, LGBTQ-narratives and so on.

Build motivation by creating a 21-day routine to build a healthy habit. Read for 20 minutes consistently every day: one abstract, two pages from a critical essay, or summarise one idea. Make a mind-map of a theme, free-write for 10 minutes, and note down "gaps" you find. After 21 days, you will automatically see new patterns emerge.

I am in the final year of B.A. Economics and aspire to be an IFS officer. My parents and professor suggest pursuing an M.A. in Economics as a backup and for preparation for exams such as the UPSC, as well as for the IES and RBI DEPR. What should I do? Nandana

Dear Nandana,

For entry into the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) you have to attempt the UPSC CSE. The preparation is broad-based, but Economics is useful because it strengthens General Studies Paper 1, Optional Paper 2 (if you choose Economics), and understanding of international economics, trade, and diplomacy. Economics is high-scoring and analytical. An M.A. in Economics could deepen your understanding and improve your optional marks.

Other exams such as the IES and RBI DEPR can also be your plan B, as these offer roles in economic policy roles. Additionally, an M.A. in Economics keeps you eligible for these roles, as well as state economic services, which serve as excellent backups.

I have a Master's in Botany and worked as a botanist in a private Ayurvedic research centre, but resigned due to an emergency. I attempted the Indian Forest Service exam but couldn't make it. I am working in the private sector and have no time to study or the money to join a coaching centre. What should I do? Gouri

Dear Gouri,

Spend some time deciding what you really want. Is Forest Service still the main goal? Do you want to explore alternative public sector/research careers? If so, create a micro-study plan for the UPSC prelims. Check out NCERT textbooks, standard reference books and papers from previous years. Use online resources that are free on YouTube, PDF notes, and join discussion forums and so on.

Also, explore a job that can provide some income and time for the UPSC prep. Consider a research or teaching role that is flexible (college, online teaching, NGOs, or herbal companies) for the next eight months or a year to continue your IFS preparation. If not successful, pivot to research or government science roles.

Target other Government exams (as a backup option) and try to leverage your M.Sc. Botany and research experience. Check out State Forest Service Exams as they have less competition. Look for posts as a Scientist or Research Officer across CSIR, ICMR, ICAR and Ayurvedic/Herbal boards. UPSC CDS, CAPF or State Civil Services is also a feasible backup. Another option is to be a lecturer in Botany or Life Sciences in a private institute.

I am in Class 12 (History, Political Science, Geography) and plan to pursue BA LLB. Will Law give me an edge in UPSC prep and also serve as a strong backup career? Uzain

Dear Uzain,

BA LLB is a five-year integrated programme and integrates UPSC preparation with your degree. The General Studies Paper 1 Polity, Governance comprises the constitution, legal systems, rights, duties, and governance structure, all of which is covered in the course. For the Optional Paper, Law is an optional subject. Legal knowledge helps you write structured, analytical essays on justice, governance, human rights, democracy and so on, so the Essay Paper also gets covered. A strong understanding of governance, laws, and social issues impresses interviewers for the Interview/Mains.

Law is also a strong, independent career choice, so even if UPSC doesn't work out immediately, you can get in legal practice (court litigation, corporate law, public interest law) or write judiciary exams (state judicial services or higher judiciary later) or explore legal advisory roles (in government departments, corporate firms, NGOs) or academic roles in law colleges (after LLM), research, or think tanks.

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.

SAVE THE DATE

Admissions

The University of Sheffield, the U.K., invites applications for its new M.Sc. in Data and Digital Humanities, starting this September. Scholarships are available.
Eligibility: Minimum 60% in a Bachelor's degree in any subject from a recognised institution. Overall IELTS score of 6.5 with at least 6.0 in each component, or equivalent.
https://tinyurl.com/5bzx8t2v

Shiv Nadar University Chennai, has opened applications for its UG programmes for 2026-27. Admissions to programmes in Engineering, Commerce, and Economics will be conducted through the Shiv Nadar University Chennai Entrance Examination, which will begin in April 2026.
https://tinyurl.com/4afdyvpm

IIIT Hyderabad's Division of Flexible Learning invites applications for its online M.Sc. Data Science programme, which begins on April 6.
Eligibility: Bachelor's degree in Basic Science, Technology, Engineering, Social Sciences, Commerce or Business. Must have completed a basic course in programming and Maths (calculus, linear algebra and probability theory).
Deadline: February 12
https://tinyurl.com/mvza6zzs

Plaksha University has launched a one-year, residential M.Sc. Artificial Intelligence programme.
Eligibility: Four-year B.Tech or B.E or four-year Bachelor's in the Sciences or Economics or three-year PG Diploma or Master's with foundation in Maths, Statistics and Programming and valid CAT, GMAT, GRE or GATE score.
https://shorturl.at/3xMRi

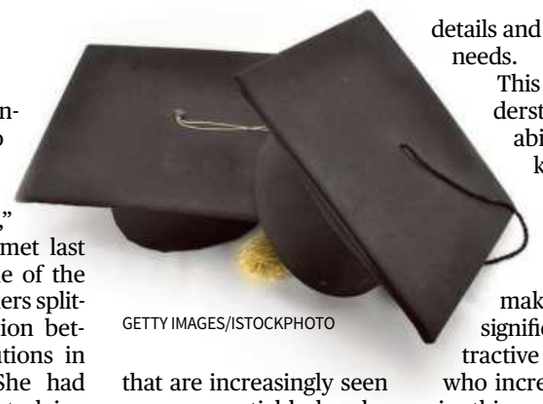
IIT-Delhi has launched an Executive Programme in Healthcare Entrepreneurship and Management.
Eligibility: A Bachelor's degree from a recognised institution.
XYZ

Registrations are now open for the February cycle of the **Management Aptitude Test (MAT)** for MBA and PGDM admissions.
Eligibility: Graduates in any discipline.
Deadline: February 26 for paper-based test and March 2 for online test.
https://mat.aima.in.

Learning without borders

How dual degrees help students develop multi-disciplinary skills

Anita Patankar



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"I am not just earning two credentials I am learning two ways of thinking," said a student I met last year. She was one of the many young learners splitting their education between two institutions in two countries. She had spent two years studying business in India and was preparing to complete the final phase of her programme at a partner university in the U.K. "When you study in two systems," she said, "you realise there's no single way to approach a problem. There's always another lens."

That, in essence, is what the new wave of dual and joint-degree programmes is all about: training students to think in more than one language of knowledge. The 21st-century workplace rewards agility over allegiance. Career paths are no longer straight lines, leading neatly from classroom to cubicle; they are lattices, connected, fluid, and global. In such a world, education must move beyond the comfort of single disciplines, single geographies, and simple world views.

Cross-border learning

Universities have responded to this shift by reimagining learning as a cross-border experience. The idea is straightforward: a student may begin a programme in one country, complete it in another, and graduate with degrees from both institutions. However, the impact is profound. Dual degrees cultivate multidisciplinary thinking, cultural fluency, and adaptability; qualities that are increasingly seen as non-negotiable by global employers.

The appeal lies not only in its dual credentials but also in the mindset it fosters. When students transition between two academic systems, they learn how to adapt to contrasting learning philosophies: the content-focused precision of one and the discussion-driven flexibility of the other. A student studying Engineering and Art History, for example, learns the analytical, structural thinking of Engineering and the critical, contextual thinking of the Humanities.

Benefits

This fusion creates a powerful kind of mind. It helps students to:

Think differently: They don't just see a problem from one angle, but from two or more, allowing for more creative and complete solutions.

Across disciplines: In the real world, problems are rarely isolated. Climate change, for instance, requires input from Science, Economics, Policy, and Social Studies. Dual degrees equip one better to connect these dots.

Adapt to varied roles: The dual qualification creates flexibility. Graduates can comfortably move between roles such as technical specialist to project manager because they understand technical details and organisational needs.

This breadth of understanding, the ability to apply knowledge and methods from more than one field is what makes graduates significantly more attractive to employers, who increasingly recognise this as a marker of resilience and cross-cultural competence. A graduate who has lived and studied in multiple contexts is usually better equipped to lead diverse teams, interpret dynamic market trends, and communicate across cultural boundaries.

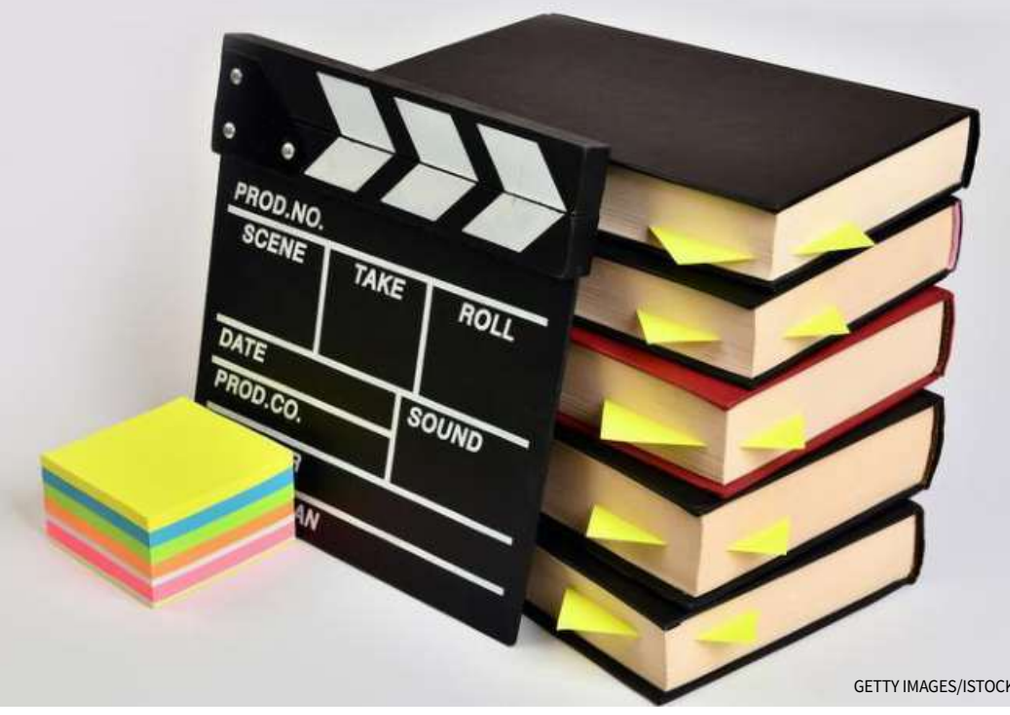
Dual-degree programmes also blur the old boundaries between theory and practice. The outcome isn't just two-degree certificates; it is a deep-rooted foundation of insights that can be applied anywhere.

The future of education will not belong to those who memorise answers but to those who can ask better questions in more than one context. Dual degrees represent a quiet revolution in that direction. They prepare students not to think in terms of either/or, but in terms of and/also. As the student I met put it, she isn't chasing multiple titles, she is learning multiple ways to see. Perhaps that is the truest mark of education in our time: not what we know, but how many worlds we learn to think in. True education doesn't just build professionals; it builds people who see connection where others see difference.

The writer is Executive Director of Symbiosis Dubai.

Take a critical view

The importance of media education in developing critical thinking



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

WIDE ANGLE
Albert P' Rayan

In the early 1990s, when I was in charge of Media Education at the Centre for Culture and Communication (C&C), Loyola College, I conducted media education workshops for teachers and students in schools. Film appreciation and criticism formed an integral part of these workshops, and interactions with participants provided valuable insights into how young students perceive films and the influence movies have on them. Although the term critical thinking was not widely used three decades ago, fostering participants' ability to think critically was a central objective of these media education initiatives.

Critical absence

Today, critical thinking is a widely emphasised educational goal, and the National Education Policy (NEP) highlights its importance. However, media education remains largely absent from the curricula of most educational institutions. This omission is significant, given the pervasive influence of films and other media on students' perceptions, attitudes, and values. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, several chief ministers and politicians have emerged from the film industry and the popularity of film stars often helps them win the admiration of young people and, ultimately, their votes in democratic elections.

As early as 1910, in *How We Think*, John Dewey used the term reflective thought interchangeably with critical thinking. He described it as a conscious and deliberate effort to establish sound reasons for one's beliefs, contrasting it with uncritical thinking, which involves minimal reflection. For Dewey, critical thinking was a fundamental educational goal. He argued that education should prepare learners to become active, reflective participants in a democratic society, capable of assessing knowledge, analysing issues, and questioning assumptions rather than passively absorbing information.

Today, visual media is extremely powerful, and filmmakers, politicians, marketers, and others often use it to promote ideologies, disseminate misinformation/disinformation, and market products and services, frequently without encouraging critical reflection. While several well-made films highlight important historical events that the younger generation should understand and respond to critically, some propaganda films are produced solely to rewrite or distort history. Unfortunately, many young people remain passive consumers of media, unable to distinguish between information and misinformation, or between misinformation and disinformation. The influence of such films is clearly visible in the views young people express across various social media platforms.

Polarising views

Students and educators should be encouraged to view films critically by deconstructing narratives, identifying historical bias, assessing accuracy, substantiating interpretations with evidence, and presenting views in an objective and balanced manner. Films such as *The Kashmir Files* (2022), *The Kerala Story* (2023), *Article 370* (2024), and *Parasakthi* (2026) have generated intense polarisation: supporters praise them for revealing "untold stories" while critics describe them as divisive, inaccurate, and potentially harmful for perpetuating communal stereotypes.

If viewers engage with such films by asking critical questions such as why certain political parties support a particular film, how different sections of society respond to it, whether these responses are justified, what impact the film has on individuals and society, and whether history is presented in a balanced manner, they can deconstruct narratives better and distinguish between propaganda and truth, as well as between information and misinformation or disinformation.

The Tamil film *Parasakthi* is based on the protests in Tamil Nadu against Hindi imposition in 1965 and the police firing at Pollachi, which the film claims led to 200 deaths. Critics have accused the makers of distorting history and exaggerating the toll of the firing. A former lieutenant in the Madras Regiment who was posted in the Coimbatore region during the agitation has, in an interview with The Hindu, stated that the Madras Regiment comprised entirely South Indians, mostly Tamils, and not the "Hindi army" as depicted in the film.

This raises important questions: Who is right and who is wrong? Has history been distorted, and if so, to what extent? What impact might such portrayals have on viewers who watch the film without engaging in critical thinking?

Analysing several reviews, social media posts, and comments on the film and discussing them with young people, I observed that many young viewers are easily influenced by certain aspects of the film and often remain uncritical in their viewing. Questioning the claims of filmmakers who spread misinformation or pursue hidden agendas is possible only when students are trained to view films critically. Researching, reading, rereading, and discussing are the strongest antidotes to misinformation: they sharpen critical thinking, expose readers to multiple perspectives, and help distinguish evidence from opinion. A critical reader learns to question sources, recognise bias, and resist emotional manipulation. In an age when half-truths travel faster than facts, reading deeply and widely is not merely a habit but a civic responsibility.

French writer Georges Duhamel was right when he said, "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images." To reduce the negative impact of moving images on students' thinking, they need to become media literate. Media education plays a key role in training students to become critical viewers of historical films by helping them differentiate between drama and documentary, deconstruct messages, identify bias, compare cinematic portrayals with historical facts, and question the purpose of narratives and the dominant perspectives they promote.

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

Beyond the percentile

What to look for when selecting a management institute after the CAT results are announced

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Shrajal Gupta

Once the CAT results are out, the next step is to choose the right institute for a management programme. This is not just a credential but a launchpad to craft a professional identity and unlock career mobility. Here are some parameters to consider before you select the right institute for you.

Not just ranks: Ranking provides a broad reference but rarely captures what truly determines success. That is the teaching methodology. Explore how learning takes place rather than how the institute is rated. Modern Management careers demand analytical ability, problem-solving, and adaptability, not memorised knowledge. So, find out whether the institutes include simulations, case-based learning and practical exposure, if classroom experiences are interactive and discussion-led, and whether faculty members are connected to the industry or involved in applied research. Look for institutes that integrate experiential and interdisciplinary learning.

Approvals and accreditations: Check for approvals from AICTE and accreditation by bodies such as NBA and SAQS or MBA equivalence from AIU for PGDM programmes. These validations ensure academic quality, international recognition, and acceptance by employers and foreign universities. Accredited institutions also undergo continuous assessment, ensuring the curriculum, teaching standards, and evaluation systems remain updated.

Prioritise skill-building: A course name may sound attractive, but what matters is whether it prepares you for the real job market. Check if the institute offers training in tools such as Power BI, Advanced Excel, analytics platforms, and the MS Office suite; soft-skill modules such as communication, workplace etiquette, leadership, and power dressing; and structured internships and live corporate projects that lead to genuine exposure. Institutes that integrate technical and behavioural skill-building equip students for competitive roles in consulting, data-driven functions, operations, marketing, and strategy.

Placement quality over claims: A strong placement process is not defined by the highest package quoted in brochures. Students should study the broader picture and look at median salary trends rather than peak figures, recruiter consistency, diversity of roles offered, and alumni progression. Institutes with long-term corporate relationships provide stable career pathways.

Campus culture and mentorship: Culture determines whether students learn to take initiative, lead projects, and collaborate. Before finalising, observe whether the faculty are approachable and mentorship-driven, if platforms for student-led clubs, competitions and research exist, and if the environment encourages innovation, critical thinking and entrepreneurial ideas. Students thrive where they feel heard, challenged, and supported.

Industry collaboration: The best institutes build bridges between classrooms and boardrooms. Check if the curriculum includes summer internships that add real value, live or consultancy-style projects with companies, industry talks, certifications, and knowledge partnerships and workshops with experts from finance, IT, retail, supply chain, analytics, and so on.

Social responsibility: Institutions that invest in community development, employability initiatives for underserved groups, and inclusive learning programmes help students understand the larger social impact of business and build empathy, perspective, and grounded leadership qualities.

Choosing a college should be a goal-based decision, not a compromise. Reflect on the kind of professional you want to be, whether the institute will give you confidence, skills and clarity, whether you will leave with just a degree or be industry-ready.

The CAT score opens the door, but the institute you choose will determine how far you go. In a world where industries evolve faster than syllabi, the right management college should prepare you to evolve with them.

The writer is Assistant Professor, Jagan Institute of Management Studies, Delhi.

Microscopes and meaningful learning

Science Education researcher Rafikh Shaikh on what it means to be a learning scientist

A monthly series by WWF-India that highlights niche and unconventional green careers through the stories of well-known personalities from the field of environment and conservation.

One morning, while cleaning the ceiling fan at home, I noticed that the dust on the blades contained tiny coloured fibres, not just black soot. When I examined a sample under a microscope, I found small particles that appeared to be microplastics. This led me to develop methods to collect, detect, and count microplastic particles, which I later used with school students to explore environmental issues.

I grew up in a small village in Maharashtra's Beed district, surrounded by farms, trees, insects, and animals. While I always questioned how things worked, I did not know that studying learning could become a career. While I completed my education in Microbiology, my trajectory changed when I discovered a Ph.D. in Science Education at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, Mumbai. During this course, I realised I could study how people learn science, design educational experiences, and pursue research as a career.

As a learning scientist, I study how people understand scientific concepts and design activities. As a science education researcher, I examine how teachers teach, how students grasp or struggle with ideas, and how we can improve curricula and learning tools. These fields remain new in India, but leave a meaningful footprint.

Focus on the environment

I often focus my work on environmental education. At the Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, I design activities that connect students with visible ecosystems and microscopic worlds. A major highlight has been my collaboration with Prof. Manu Prakash from Stanford University. He developed the "Foldscope", a low-cost paper microscope that allows users to observe microorganisms and other tiny structures in remarkable detail. What makes it truly unique is that students can explore entire living microbial worlds without removing them from their natural habitat or harming them.

My profession requires me to divide my time between teaching and research. I use the remaining time to plan studies, visit schools, analyse data, write papers, mentor students, write papers and more. On some days, I conduct workshops, allowing students to explore microscopic and environmental worlds first-hand through the Foldscope and hands-on, place-based activities.

Working with school students is rewarding. Watching their curiosity and creativity come alive during projects or investigations reminds me why I do this. I also value collaborating with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, travelling, and producing research papers and educational resources.

At the same time, challenges remain. Securing funding can be difficult as Learning Sciences and Science Education Research are still emerging fields in India. Engaging with international research communities is also tricky, since contexts and resources often differ. I address these challenges by building networks of learning scientists and researchers within India, and by focusing on environmental themes that are locally relevant, such as microplastic pollution and biodiversity

In the future

For youngsters considering this path, I advise exploring internships or short projects at institutes that focus on learning, cognition, or science education. These provide a concrete sense of the questions researchers ask, the type of work they do, and will help you decide whether this is the right path for you.

Observe, ask, analyse, and engage with learners. Those who care about the environment can use this field to combine science, education and environmental responsibility in a career that makes a true impact.

The Maths-AI connection

As algorithms grow smarter, the human relationship with Maths must deepen, not disappear

Neelakantha Bhanu Prakash

A decade ago, self-driving cars were science fiction. Today, they're navigating our streets. AI has quietly slipped into our homes, workplaces, and classrooms, changing how we live and think. Yet amid this revolution, one truth stands tall: it all began with Maths.

Maths is the invisible language that allows machines to see, translate, predict, and adapt. For educators and students alike, understanding this connection isn't optional anymore; it's the foundation for the future.

Just as AI grows smarter through mathematical models, humans grow sharper through mathematical thinking. When children learn math conceptually – not by memorising formulas but by exploring why they work – they develop reasoning, pattern recognition, and problem-solving abilities that mirror the logic AI is built upon. These are the same cognitive muscles required to design, refine, and question the algorithms shaping our world.

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Advanced areas, such as graph theory or information theory, may sound distant but they fuel everything from search engines to space exploration. While AI tools can now perform complex computations, it's the human understanding of how and why they work that defines progress.

In the classroom

If AI is here to stay, Maths education must evolve to match it. For too long, classrooms have rewarded rote learning. The future demands an approach that prizes conceptual clarity, practical application, and creative reasoning. Students need to explore the why behind equations, connecting mathematical logic to real-world contexts, from climate modelling to financial forecasting to the ethics of AI. Teachers must guide learners toward strategic problem-solving: breaking complex problems into smaller, logical steps. Within the curriculum, core disciplines like probability, statistics, linear algebra, and calculus must be given the spotlight they deserve. These subjects are not abstract hurdles; they are the building blocks of every intelligent system around us.

AI should be a learning companion, not a shortcut. When used thoughtfully, it can make classrooms more interactive and insightful. AI-powered tutors can handle routine exercises, freeing educators to focus on reasoning, discussion, and creative exploration. But the future of learning won't just depend on using AI. The real skill for the next generation lies in prompting: knowing how to ask the right questions, frame problems clearly, and guide AI to produce meaningful outputs. This requires mathematical precision, logical thinking, and linguistic clarity; all skills that Maths education naturally builds.

When students learn to structure their thoughts, break problems into steps, and define parameters clearly, they don't just learn Maths; they know how to think in the language AI understands. By teaching children how to prompt and reason with AI, we prepare them not to be replaced by it, but to lead it.

AI may redefine our tools, but Maths defines our understanding. As algorithms grow smarter, the human relationship with Maths must deepen, not disappear. This is why Maths is even more crucial because when we teach children to see patterns, question outcomes, and explore possibilities, we prepare them not just to use AI, but to shape it.

The writer is the founder and CEO of Bhanzu