

## ARTICLE

## Careers and Choices



By Amitabh Srivastava  
Governing Body Member, Prayas JAC Society

Ever since I was in school I have been thinking and asking questions to every academician I met, why must a child of Class X study Algebra, Geometry or Trigonometry? I have received no answers, only apologies by teachers who teach science, and who feel that knowledge of maths makes a child intelligent and more systematic.

That still does not answer my basic question. How much maths does a normal human being (who is not into teaching) need in life? This was at a time when calculators were not discovered. Maximum dealing of housewives was with grocery or the milk vendor. The other bills of electricity or water or gas came ready made.

With this basic premise I want to say that when VIPs in various fields take it as a matter of pride to mention that they flunked their maths papers or were very scared, it gives a sort of reassurance to children that they are not the only duffers. But now that the admission season has begun in right earnest, those passing out of school should be well advised to take up subjects that they are good at because they have to spend four years for graduation, thanks to the New Education Policy.

Choice of careers are endless even for those who quit maths. Even science students have been taking up subjects like History to join the prestigious UPSC competition.

Besides the IAS, another shining option is that of MBA with Indian IIMs ranking among the best in Asia if not the world. There was a time when it was believed that the CAT exam to enter a recognised MBA course was oriented towards engineering students.

May be, it still is but the fact is that a lot of Humanities students are getting into MBA. I personally know of a girl who was an MA English and just managed to get into an MBA institute at the last minute.

True there is a proper English paper to compete for a PG B School but that is not the only one. But this girl was so determined to prove herself that she ultimately topped her batch after two years.

That's the basic funda of choosing a career- putting your heart and soul into it. And that will only come when you love what you are doing not what peer pressure forced you to take up. As I read the reports of Delhi University admissions, once again it is Commerce that is the first choice of students, not Humanities, not Science. Maybe parents feel that with the rise in commercial ventures including the share market, where a lot of educated youth are invested in due to lack of jobs, commerce is a safe bet.



But it is also a fact that many of the top cricketers of the country are engineers by qualification. Beginning with good old EAS Prasanna and S Venkataraghavan, modern names include K Srikanth, Anil Kumble, Javagal Srinath, R Ashwin, to name only the topmost few.

The best colleges in the country and even government bodies including banks give due recognition to sportspersons. Two wrestlers just resigned their jobs in Railways to join politics.

Even though many student leaders have made a career in politics there is no minimum degree needed for joining politics in India.

Just for information, several qualified engineers have also joined Bollywood. The list includes R Madhavan, Kriti Sanon, Kartik Aaryan, Vicky Kaushal, Sonu Sood, late Sushant Singh Rajput and Taapsee Pannu while comedian and dialogue writer Kader Khan was teaching at an engineering college before joining Bollywood.

Which again proves what I said in the beginning - the choices before the students today are endless. It depends on you where you want to fly. And of course, there is journalism.

There was a time not long back when taking Hindi honours was the last option and seats were left unfilled even after the last cut off was announced.

When I joined journalism in 1976 I had the choice of taking either Hindi or English since I was writing in both languages. But there were only two or three Hindi newspapers which were not paying well in comparison to English.

But today Hindi journalism, both in print and electronic, is flourishing. I told girls of Prayas who were joining college that even if they could not become Mahadevi Verma, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan or Amrita Pritam there were several anchors on the Indian TV Channels or those like Richa Anirudh who had made a name and huge fan following for themselves.

And lest the academia running Childhood Matters feel left out, the quality of the writings and editorials in this issue and the earlier ones should convince children that teaching is one of the noblest professions in the world. Also that if they choose it as their vocation, they would never be alone.