

Arts rides wave with changes in job scene & lure of govt services

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Pune: Till recently, when the standard X marks were not up to their expectations, students would take up arts. The faculty was regarded as one for low scorers.

As against this, in the past four or five years, trends and choices have changed with new avenues opening up in the field and students thinking of careers beyond medicine and engineering.

Going by the first round merit list for first year junior college (FYJC, std XI), the cut-off for arts stream exceeded science for the first time in many years.

The trend surprised principals of top colleges who said that subjects in humanities, behavioural studies, inclination towards government jobs through competitive examinations and good amount of extra time after regular arts classes to pursue extra-curricular activities were prime reasons students were taking up arts.

The arts stream allows students to take up another parallel course which may enhance their talents or hobbies apart from the new age avenues that the stream offers in core subjects like psychology and sociology.

Principal of Sir Parshurambhau (S P) College, Dilip Sheth, said, "Students take up music, adventure, designing, sports, performing arts among other courses which eventually make their careers."

Approach To Teaching

According to Preeti Joshi, head of the School of Liberal Arts at the MIT World Peace University practical aspects like hands-on assignments and projects and a focus on skill development in the subject of choice is enhancing employability. Mandatory internships and interaction with domain experts are on the rise.

“Programmes like Liberal Arts, interdisciplinary perspective and the changing approach in the arts stream is enabling them to explore their careers in content development, film making, yoga, documentary writing, journalism, anchoring, psephology and counselling,” she said.

Gain For Humanities

The flexibility of choosing the subject combination as per the interest and aptitude is what makes Liberal Arts an attractive option.

People are waking up to multidisciplinary learning. “Even in the new education policy, silos are considered harmful. In liberal arts, you can major in one subject and minor in another.

Liberal Arts would give us a broad-based education to understand many things together and choose what you like the best in higher studies,” Avinash Kumbhar, head of Interdisciplinary School of Science at SPPU said.

Multinationals Recruit

“Even technology needs design now. Every new gadget needs to be of the best design and should have an aesthetic sense. Hence, arts is needed everywhere. Due to the pandemic, government jobs are even more wanted. Hence, more students are taking up arts so that they can prepare for competitive exams,” Kumbhar said.

Not Really Indicative

Fundamental science institutes like the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune, and Indian Institute of Technologies have departments for humanities and social science.

Jayant Udgaonkar, director of IISER Pune, said, “We need science students to be aware of issues in society, how to write well and so on. But cut-off marks in arts alone cannot be indicative of better students choosing humanities over science faculty. There has always been a rush for economics. Increased job opportunities could be one reason for this change.”

Principal of St Mira's College, Gulshan Gidwani, said, "Many students are looking at psychology since there has been a spike in mental health issues. Others are looking at English since they can opt for script writing and editing."

Changing Outlook

Fergusson College principal Ravindrasinh Pardeshi said in the past decade he has not witnessed the arts cut-off overriding science. He attributed the trend to changing outlooks among students. Pardeshi said, "Students are opting for competitive exams. Science faculty students are switching to arts for the first year of graduation to pursue a career in public administration, political science or language specific."