

MOTHER TONGUE

India's diverse linguistic landscape includes 22 Scheduled Languages and 19,500 other active languages, reflecting the country's rich cultural diversity.

Multilingualism is deeply ingrained in India's education system, with students often navigating learning in two or more languages.

Scholar David Graddol views multilingualism as a cognitive asset, enhancing cognitive flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The demand for English language education is increasing in India due to its perceived economic value. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of local languages in education, advocating for a multilingual curriculum that incorporates mother tongue instruction, English, and other foreign languages. While multilingualism offers significant benefits, its implementation in Indian classrooms faces challenges such as the diversity of languages spoken and varying levels of proficiency among students.

Strategies for effective implementation include conducting research to inform policies, creating quality teaching materials tailored to linguistic needs, and providing teacher training in multilingual pedagogy. The importance of preserving and promoting local languages is need of hour while recognizing the growing demand for English language skills in India. It highlights the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and its role in preparing students for a globalized world. By aligning with the NEP 2020, the government's commitment to inclusive education through multilingual instruction. Challenges such as linguistic diversity and proficiency disparities are acknowledged, indicating a realistic assessment of the complexities involved. The suggested strategies for implementation address key areas such as research, teaching materials, and teacher training, reflecting a holistic approach to overcoming challenges. Overall, it effectively advocates for the integration of multilingualism into India's education system while acknowledging the need for careful planning and innovative solutions to address implementation challenges.

No Third Party interference

K.V. SEETHARAMAIAH

Third party interference in the internal affairs of the country is highly unacceptable. Any external imputation on the country's electoral and legal processes must be rejected outright. The recent remarks by the US State Department are not conducive for good relationship between India and the US. Randhir Jaiswal, the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs has rightly rejected the US interference in the Indian administration following the comments by his counterpart Matthew Miller that the Washington DC has been continuing to closely follow the developments related to the recent arrest of Arvind Kejriwal. India had to take the unpleasant decision of summoning the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US embassy in New Delhi, Gloria Berbeno, to the South Block in Raisina Hill conveying to her the strong objection over an earlier remark of a spokesperson of the American State Department on the arrest of Kejriwal. It is not impertinent to recall what Colonel R.S.N. Singh, an Indian defence expert and Indian Army Officer said about Kejriwal. He said Kejriwal is not a political threat but a security threat to this country, his main objective being to destabilise India to perpetuate the US agenda. This has been reportedly penned by Singh exactly 10 years back. Further, the US has said that it is aware of the Congress allegations that tax authorities have frozen some of the bank accounts in a manner that will make it challenging to effectively campaign in the upcoming elections. It is the headache of Congress that it did not file the returns in time and it is the headache of the Congress that it did not disclose cash donations which did not attract tax exemptions. Miller says that he encourages fair, transparent, timely legal processes. He hopes that no one would object to that. Who is Miller to encourage or discourage anything that goes on depending upon the circumstances? The very interference is itself objectionable. What does the US expect in matters concerning money laundering? Is the US not indirectly abetting the perpetrators of crime? It requires no need for India to explain to any other country that the legal processes are driven only by the rule of law. It is disquieting that the United Nations (UN) has also reacted to the arrest of Kejriwal. The UN advocates that everyone's right is protected in India where Lok Sabha elections are upcoming. The right of any party or individual has not been infringed. Any party or individual loses the right when rules are violated and financial crimes are committed. If the ruling party should not be given any advantage, the opposition parties should exercise extra care not to commit any mistake intentionally or unintentionally for gaining pecuniary advantages. Nobody is above law. If Kejriwal is really innocent, the Indian courts can see it. If he is found guilty, the Indian judiciary cannot be browbeaten by external forces against convicting him. Germany or the US or the UN should not only see the arrest of Kejriwal or frozen Bank accounts of Congress, but they must also see the financial crimes committed and not filing the Income Tax Returns in time. Selective look at something or someone does no good. AAP leader Raghav Chadha's meeting with Pro-Khalistani UK MP Preet Gill is under the scanner. No party or individual is above law. Everyone must reap the fruits of the seeds sowed. Kejriwal is now locked in legal battle. The Indian judiciary can see the truth. This is time for Kejriwal to show his patriotism by denouncing the interference of Germany, the US and the UN in the internal affairs of India.

VIJAY GARC

Career Options to Pursue after 12th, sounds familiar, doesn't it? If you're a twelfth grader, this topic might be a recurrent conversation at your home. No matter how nonchalant we appear, we are all concerned about how to move further, become successful, and independent. If the thought of what to choose as a profession is niggling at the back of your mind frequently.

Graphic Designing

If you are creative and have a penchant for churning out attractive designs that are a visual delight, you have great potential to become an eminent and successful graphic designer.

Again, with the proliferation of the digital platform, the demand for competent, skilled graphic designers has increased. Today, the various opportunities enable you to pursue a graphic designing career after your 12th. What one considered just a hobby once can be turned into a full-fledged career with great growth opportunities.

You have to possess an aesthetic sense of design, color patterns, and light. Students should also be able to disseminate useful information that is meant to educate or inform through imagery and pictures. You can become a multimedia designer, web, logo, flash designer, or a creative director. There's plenty of work like creating templates, editing photographs, that require the skilled expertise of graphic designers. There are many courses available that help you to understand the different graphic designing software. You can intermingle your creativity with the qualities and features of the software to bring out the best possible outcome. A graphic designing degree can strengthen your chances of getting a coveted job in a big corporate organization. Most enterprises require the services of designing for their business activities to be fruitful. Graphic design also includes animation and enhanced visual effects. Whether it is the user interface, website designing, illustrations, or animation you can pursue your passion and become successful.

Graphic designers can choose a specific niche aligned to their inclination. Or, they can be flexible to incorporate any graphic designing job that requires the touch of an accomplished graphic designer.

Computer Applications

This is one of the most popular professional courses as well as a great career choice for students. Computer applications courses deal with understanding the basic and advanced constituents of computers. One has to possess an analytical bent of mind and have the proficiency of mastering several programming languages to be able to become a successful computer applications professional. Many students take Bachelors of Computer Applications after their class 12 exams. The course helps them to have an all-around understanding of the different concepts relating to computers. Software developing, web designing, technical writing, consulting, multimedia programming, coding, understanding database are some of the areas in which you need to gain expertise to become a proficient computer applications professional. Technical enthusiasts who have unconditional love for anything related to computers can have a very prosperous career in computer applications. You can coordinate, implement, and execute the design of an application and complete the architecture of a particular program. Coding is a very popular part of the computer application process. You can also learn about the security aspect of the data processing system and have a career as a system security manager and security analyst. Computer application requires you to achieve fluency in understanding programming. Also, an inherent love for mathematics and science will additionally benefit you to achieve a great level of critical, objective thinking, to become adroit crisis managers.

Ethical Hacking

This is one of the most favorite career options today which is both extremely interesting and lucrative. Ethical hacking is for information technology lovers who want to develop and update their skills to identify vulnerabilities, security threats in a system, and eradicate the possible chances of disruption. Companies want to unfurl their wings and make their presence felt in the online domain. This invites security risks from malware, viruses, that breach privacy and can create havoc with your data. One has to be very careful about protecting their pertinent information about the company and consumers. lot of big companies have fallen prey to malicious hackers who steal valuable information and data from companies. Ethical hacking eliminates the chances of such activities by digging into the system looking for weaknesses, and providing solutions. Cybersecurity is a growing concern in the technological domain today. Therefore, organizations today have a great demand for ethical hackers. To become proficient in this field, you have to possess strong technical knowledge of programming like C, C++, Java, HTML, Python. You'll also have to learn advanced coding. There are different programs for ethical hacking and cybersecurity in India. Training is provided in the following: Online Ethical Hacking Course, Cybersecurity Course, Forensic Expert Training, Network Security Training, Web Security Training, And Others. It pays exceptionally well, and you are constantly in demand. The huge presence of practically every business and sector in the online space makes it an evergreen career to pursue.

Hotel Management

With a country's economic progress, the hospitality industry also sees a boost in its operations. The hotel management field is one of the most remunerative career options that you can choose to pursue after the 12th. It involves having a presence of mind, being creative, and possessing the gift of the gab. Students every year enroll for hotel management courses after their 12th standard. The courses cover the entire facet of running the hospitality services. This includes client management, food industry, budgeting, accounting, sales, marketing, public relations, advertising among other important aspects. There are degrees and diploma courses for

students. Skilled hotel Management professionals can be great assets for the hospitality industry. The more value, assistance you provide to your visitors, the greater impression it has on their minds. India is one of the most favorite definitions for tourists all across the globe. It has ample chances of a flourishing hospitality sector with competent, creative, and innovative Hotel Management professionals.

Law

A career in law is one of the most respectable as well as very high-paying professions. You have to sit for the all-India bar exam to be able to practice law. Analytical and critical thinking is required to become a successful lawyer able to handle complex cases. A logical mind and eloquence are key traits of a successful lawyer. To be able to put across your points without any room for ambiguity defines how good a lawyer you are. Moreover, it is important to have a sense of justice and to stand for the right reasons to become a brand and maintain your good reputation. There are different branches of law that you can take up when studying in the field. You can become a corporate lawyer, a civil criminal lawyer. You can also take up litigation, intellectual property law, business law, cyber law. This career almost always comes with the potential for high income and job stability. It helps you to hone your skills in critical understanding, reasoning, and analytical thinking. It boosts your confidence and helps to ensure that you can speak confidently in front of people. You get accolades, prestige, and reverence when you make a difference in the lives of the people.

Tourism and Travel Studies

Tourism is a prosperous industry in India. Hence, the possibilities of a successful career in this field are infinite. You can work in travel agencies as a communications officer, public relations officer, coordinator, consultant. There are several other areas like logistics, airlines, adventure tourism experts, tourism guides, event coordinators, tour coordinators, and operators. It is to be noted that the tourism industry is still growing and has immense growth potential. So you can already understand the vast number of jobs that will be generated in the coming years. Whether it is itinerary planning, customer handling, and management, foreign exchange, sales, and marketing, this sector has plenty of job positions and designations to fill. You have to be a people person, should not get ruffled in moments of crises and trouble. Travel and tourism professionals have to possess the qualities of composure and a patience countenance. They should also be affable, and convivial when tourists and travelers ask questions. There are a lot of degree and diploma courses available in India for travel and tourism. The remuneration is great and there are several additional perquisites that you get in the form of free travel, commissions, hotel stay, etc. You can enroll in undergrad courses right after you complete class 12. Students can also pursue a post-graduation degree in tourism. That allows you to achieve even more success, and you can become managers, directors, and administrators.

Company Secretaryship

A company secretary is responsible for the efficient operations of the business. It is a great avenue for students after 12th class. They take care of the overall welfare and engage with stakeholders and customers. Company secretaries find jobs in private as well as public sectors and financial institutions. Banks employ company secretaries to get the message across to different stakeholders and other concerned parties in the business. The company secretary also helps with communication among different departments. They are efficient policymakers creating different company policies. They can also be corporate planners organizing ventures, collaborations, mergers, acquisitions, takeovers. Company secretaries have to don many hats in a corporation. Right from looking after the managerial aspects to the analysis of tax as well as Consultancy Services, they can be in charge of many things. It is a high-paying stable source of income. Students wanting to become company secretaries will have to clear the initial, intermediate, and final stages of the company secretary (CS) exam. They go through a rigorous training program at different levels to understand the practical implementation of the job responsibilities of a company secretary.

BBA

BBA or bachelor of business administration is one of the most popular career choices for students after 12th. The reason for such humongous popularity of this course is that it offers education as well as immense opportunities for employment in a very high-paying job position. Some of the most reputed institutions offer BBA courses to students across different streams. You should have passed your 12th with the minimum marks required to be eligible for the entrance exams. Students who want to directly get into their professionals start working in the different departments managing the business administration of those organizations. Some subjects that are covered in the BBA course are finance, accounting, tax, human resource, marketing, e-commerce, and Management. You can take up positions in the finance, sales, marketing, client management sectors in different business enterprises. You can also apply for government jobs and further your prospects through an MBA program.

Photography

A photography career can be a very interesting experience provided you have a fondness for creativity and innovation. It is a fruitful job that requires you to have a strong understanding of the technicalities of photography in addition to your creative and artistic skills. It is one of the most satisfying forms of art that needs patience, effort, and meticulous attention to the minutest of details. Only then will you come up with the best results and produce images that would influence, impress, and appeal to people. The employment opportunities in the photography field have seen a great rate of increase with advertising companies, media houses,

and different digital platforms coming up in plenty. There was always a great demand for photographers but today there are a whole lot of new opportunities. You can enroll in undergraduate programs, diplomas, and certificate courses in photography. A photography course does not require you to come from a particular stream and people from arts, commerce, or science can apply. You have people who are adventurers and can turn into wildlife photographers. Then there are advertising photographers, fashion photographers, wedding photographers, event photographers, industrial photographers, among others. One of the main aspects of photography is to understand the operations of the camera. You should have incisive knowledge on how to handle the camera and its different modes to bring out the best pictures possible. To achieve that, you have to possess an innate love for photography. It's one of the most ambitious professions out there and people excelling in photography can have a flourishing career and a high paying job. Advertising Agencies, media houses, publications of different organizations, magazines, online portals, recruit photographers regularly for different services. A freelance photographer also has plenty of opportunities to explore different domains.

Music

Music is one of the most loved branches of performing arts. Students who have the talent and capacity to play an instrument, sing, and create music can have a very successful career in music. You have to understand where your talent lies, and then select an area of music. Whether you take up vocals or play instruments you have to identify your knack. There are vocal courses that teach the essentials of singing and work on honing your skills. A career in music after 12th can mean you starting your own music classes, teaching music to students, and performing yourself. The course in music helps you to become familiar with the different nuances that make this performing art appealing. A music course would ensure that you get a platform to display your talent and show your capabilities. You have to be well versed in musical instruments, and should have a flair for creativity. It is not something that you learn by memorizing things from a book. It comes from practical learning and performing. If you become a successful musician, the money is for your asking. However, the initial years are arduous and you have to strive a lot to achieve that position in the music industry. Your talent backed by your sincerity and diligence can surely help you in becoming a prolific musician.

Aviation

As we grow up, a lot of us are enamored with the operations of airplanes. The thrill of being aboard a plane looking out at the vast expanse below can be intoxicating. If you're one of them, then the aviation industry is the right place for you after your 12th. However, if you decide to start working in the aviation sector you will have to put in a lot of effort and dedication. There is no doubt that it is one of the most appealing and remunerative industries globally and India is no exception. Aviation has many aspects, and you can apply for diverse jobs for a prosperous career in aviation. There are courses in airport management, commercial pilot training, ground staff & cabin crew training which generally span for up to a year. There is also aviation hospitality and office operations and administration. You have undergraduate programs, diploma programs for the modules. Once you complete the course, you open up innumerable possibilities in the field. Your tenacity, talent, and efforts can help you climb the ladder of success very quickly. Remember, when we talk about the aviation sector there is a branch called aeronautical engineering which is the full B-tech course. It teaches you how to manufacture and maintain different kinds of airplanes. Aviation is one of the finest fields you can choose after your 12th

Entrepreneurial Endeavor

Entrepreneurship courses are aimed at providing you with a thorough idea of how to run a business smoothly. The courses help budding professionals to understand how to be innovative in their approach to start and sustain a business in the long run. The difference between the other fields of work and this is that an entrepreneur is responsible entirely for how the business performs because he/she is the boss. The several entrepreneurship courses help to focus on your priorities, keep abreast of developments, understand the nature of the business, and promote it on different platforms. Undergraduate programs, diploma certificates, and postgraduate programs in entrepreneurship are quite popular. They provide enough knowledge to successfully implement and execute business endeavors and make them resounding success stories. You also have different courses like entrepreneurship management, courses for women, entrepreneurs MBA, entrepreneurship MBA in the family business, Social entrepreneurship, NGO Management among others. The key traits that are required for you to take up this course are to have great communication & engagement skills, networking ability, understanding of economics, statistics, data, and figures. Another important aspect is to have the ability to take risks and not cower down in the face of a challenge. The eligible courses that you can take up after 12th are (undergraduate) programs. Thereafter, you can apply for postgraduate programs from any recognized institution.

Conclusion

Career options after the 12th can provide you with direction and lucrative income opportunities. To become successful in any field, you have to possess the qualities of discipline, commitment, and ability. That is how you take challenges head-on and come out triumphant. You should have the ability to grasp the concepts of that particular field well to perform optimally. Once you zero in on a choice of a career, the road ahead though might seem difficult at times will have plenty of opportunities for you to succeed.

(The writer is Retired Principal).

(Concluded)

Reservation System

A Step Forward or a Step Backward?

IKKZ IKBAL AND MOHD YOUNUS BHAT

The concept of reservation in India stems prior to independence, with the introduction of reservation in education by the king of Kollhapur, Shahu Maharaj in 1902 for non-Brahmin and backward classes. Post independence, various milestones have shaped reservation policies, such as the introduction of reservations for Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the Indian Constitution in 1950 and the implementation of the Mandal Commission report recommending 27% reservation for OBCs in 1990.

The reservation system serves as a vital tool for uplifting historically disadvantaged communities by promoting social equity and inclusivity. It aims to address the systemic oppression and marginalization faced by these groups by providing opportunities in education and employment. However, if not implemented carefully, it can undermine the principles of meritocracy and equal opportunity. Apprehensions arise that the system may prioritize mediocrity over excellence, potentially diminishing the competitive environment, and efficiency within institutions. Moreover, the reservation system perpetuates a cycle of dependency and fails to tackle the root causes of inequality, such as limited access to quality education and socio-economic disparities. The decision to increase the reservation quota to 70% in Jammu & Kashmir at the expense of open merit is a blatant disregard for meritocracy and fair opportunities. Some consider this move a step towards social justice, but it has also sparked heated opposition with critics decriing it as a death knell for open merit.

In February 2024, the Press Information Bureau website released a press note that Ministry of Home Affairs, Lok Sabha passes the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024. Following which, the recent notification on 15th March 2024 by the Jammu and Kashmir administration approved a 10% quota for newly included tribal categories, raising the total reservation quota to 70% in the region. This decision includes a 10% reservation for four newly added tribes, increasing the total Scheduled Tribes (ST) reservation to 20%. Additionally, 15 new castes have been added to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) list, with the reservation percentage for OBCs enhanced to 8%. This move has sparked discussions on the core principles of fairness and equal opportunity within the region.

The controversy stemmed from the amendment of the Jammu and Kashmir

Reservation Act, 2005, driven by political motives. The key reason behind the amendment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2005, was to expand reservation benefits to socially and educationally backward classes in the region. The amendment aimed to address historical injustice and provide reservation opportunities to communities that were previously excluded. Now, the augmentation of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) quota by 10%, at the cost of open merit, has led to a sense of marginalization and disenfranchisement among the Open Merit (OM) candidates. With open merit now comprising only 30%, most of the population, constituting the remaining 70%, feels neglected, with their aspirations and ambitions being compromised.

For the tribals and the advocates of this current quota system, it is a beacon of hope, a ray of optimism. A lifeline for historically marginalized communities that believe they have been oppressed for millennia. This special quota system has provided them with access to the possibilities and opportunities that were previously the exclusive domain of the privileged few. The inclusion of new tribes including Pahari in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 15 new castes in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) has complicated the issue, adding fuel to the already raging fire. The reservation was capped at 50%. While the advocates of the reservation claim that it is a long pending recognition of their distinct socio-economic status, detractors believe it will merely worsen current disparities and deepen societal tensions. They believe this move undermines the struggles of Open Merit (OM) candidates who have endured decades of challenges. "Amid the cacophony of opinions, numerous individuals advocate for a more nuanced strategy that seeks to tackle the fundamental reasons behind inequality while also maintaining meritocratic ideals.

An alternative approach to the current reservation system for socially and economically backward communities [excluding the especially abled persons] involves, investing in education and skill development, instead of direct job reservations offering free education and support to underprivileged individuals, and utilizing government resources to uplift marginalized groups. With the widespread availability of mobile phones and the internet, the government can harness these technologies to provide free coaching to underprivileged communities, enabling them to compete in various examinations. Government institutions like schools and colleges, along with their faculty, can play a

crucial role in offering quality education to marginalized groups.

Providing discounts on essential goods and services to deserving candidates can be a more effective strategy. By optimizing government institutions, manpower, and infrastructure to assist those in need, future generations can be prevented from becoming overly reliant on the reservation system. This approach focuses on empowering individuals through education and support, promoting independence and self-sufficiency rather than perpetuating dependency on reservations.

Indeed, this reservation system is a double-edged sword, simultaneously a blessing for some and a curse for others. While it has helped in advancing the cause of social justice, it has also fostered a culture of entitlement and dependency. The challenge lies in striking the right balance, in ensuring that no one is left behind while also upholding the principles of merit and fair competition.

The road forward may have challenges and uncertainties. One thing is clear, the growing voices against 70% reservation cannot be silenced. Only time will tell if the quota system proves to be a boon or bane for the people of J&K.

Let us not be deceived by the allure of simple remedies and quick fixes. The quota system, in its current form, is merely a bandage for the deep wounds of inequity and injustice. It may seem to provide temporary relief to some, but it merely addresses the cause of socio-economic disparities.

In between all this chaos and confusion, a holistic solution to this problem is inevitable. Individuals must be allowed to shape their destinies. The education system and the skill development initiatives by the government must be enhanced and strengthened. Offering targeted assistance to underserved populations, and cultivating a culture of merit and excellence.

As citizens of Jammu and Kashmir, it is our collective responsibility to shape our future and establish a society that is inclusive and fair for everyone. We should unite to speak out against injustice, hold those in power accountable, and collaborate to construct a better future for the generations to come.

(The writers Ikcz Ikbal is an Administrator at Maryam Memorial Institute Qaziabad Kupwara and Mohd Younus Bhat is a PhD scholar at Pondicherry University).