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Self Assessment Vital in Choosing a Career

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Choosing the right career is one of the most important decisions in a student's life. One should take care of certain important factors while taking the decision, says **Prof V S Rao, President, NIIT University**, in conversation with Akash Tomer of Elets News Network (ENN).

Better higher education results in improved career opportunities. What factors students should keep in mind while selecting a specialisation for their graduation and further studies?

Nowadays, various specialisations have emerged along with the traditional options. While these specialisations have further implications on one's career, one should always keep in mind the following factors while considering any specialisation:

Aptitude and Understanding: One should have a thorough understanding of what subjects and fields interest her/him to make an informed choice.

Academic Performance: One should look back at one's performance in different subjects in class X and XII to understand what have been her/his strengths.

Aspiration: Another most important aspect is to figure out what one wants to do in the coming years; one should choose the field according to the job he aspires to bag.

Internship/Placement Opportunities: It is no revelation that your education is not fruitful unless you get good internship and placement offers. One should always check with the placement reports of an institute to get a firsthand report.

Graduation degrees in India usually revolve around the traditional courses like engineering, medical etc., what is the scope of nontraditional courses as far as Indian education space is concerned?

The most important decision a student takes right after clearing high school is choosing the right career for herself/himself, which would make or mar their professional life. Engineering, medical etc have always been the coveted career options. But there are other courses also available nowadays to pursue right after high school, and which also have promising careers as far as education space is concerned.

What are the most important factors that a candidate must consider before seeking admission in a college or university?

Choosing a college is one of the most important decisions a student ever makes. One should keep in mind the following factors while taking admission to a college or university:

Academic Excellence: Students must have the information about the curriculum, teaching-learning practices, technology used in teaching-learning, quality of faculty etc before taking admission to any college. Opportunities to participate in real time industry projects: Student should look for institutes/universities which offer opportunities to participate in real time projects in industry.

Residential Schools: Residential schools offer 24×7 opportunities to bring about holistic development of a student.

Community: College experience should be about challenging and learning as much about self. One should always look at community as an opportunity to branch out.

What are the best higher education practices followed across the globe? How can these practices be carried out in India to improve the higher education scenario of the country?

The online education and newer technology-enabled platforms are changing the way education is resourced and delivered. Over the next 10 years, e-learning is projected to grow fifteen-fold, accounting for 30% of all educational provision. Within higher education, new technologies have enormous potential to effect change. They enable universities to meet a broader range of learners' needs, adapting traditional teaching methods and offering a mix of face-to-face and online learning possibilities that allow individuals to learn anywhere, anytime.

Despite a phenomenal expansion in the education system in our country, Indian universities don't stand alongside the universities abroad, how this scenario can be improved?

As per industry data, India holds an important place in the global education industry as it has more than 1.4 million schools with over 227 million students enrolled and more than 36,000 higher education institutes. India has become the second largest market for e-learning after the US. The Central Government has done its best to make the study opportunities flexible in nature to facilitate optimal student participation. Skill development and vocational education has added a new feather to the modern system of education.

Also, now the education is only text book oriented. Courses are not industry-aligned which is causing unemployability among the youth. This is a massive challenge and one of the solutions is by forging a strong linkage between academia and industry.

Other than career benefits, how higher education helps a candidate in availing various social and personal benefits?

Education is generally considered to be the greatest equaliser in modern society. There are not only career benefits of education, but it also helps a candidate in availing various social and personal benefits such as better salaries, job satisfaction, contributing to the society a better way thus creating a better society to live in etc. Therefore, higher education is not only the key to growth in career graph, but also boosts self-confidence.

How the Indian and global education landscape has evolved in recent years? What role does educational conferences play in this evolution?

Indian and global education has many facets that existed from the historic times to the present day. Students were the passive party in the classroom where the lessons were mostly teacher oriented and more emphasis was given to the theoretical way of learning. Academics was not industry oriented which resulted in a less competitive market.

Today, Indian institutions are working towards promoting industry-academia interface. NIIT University (NU), being one of these premier institutions, has designed programmes in collaboration with organisations such as Esri, ICICI Bank, Federal Bank, United Bank and Bank of Maharashtra, Microsoft Research, IBM, WNS, etc which not only offer students career opportunities but also equips them with the ability to adapt and grow throughout their careers.

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