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Recently when I was addressing a batch of commerce students, encouraging them to equip themselves with what the industry and society wants, so as to make their services available and be better employable, one of the participants raised the hand from amidst the crowd to indicate that there is a question. As I would do anywhere else, I said “Yes Please” pointing my hand in that direction. Thus sounded the question.

“Sir, I have heard with fascination all that is there for commerce students. But, I am from the arts background. After listening to you for the last one and half hour, I have now begun to feel, that I made the biggest blunder of my life, which can never be corrected, by opting for Arts faculty. Can something be done?” I could clearly see terrible freight in the face.

For the first minute or so, I went speechless. It was a reality. Suddenly one of the participants seated in the front row, rose and asked the student to be seated as the session was for only commerce students. I was aghast at this idea, but the question had been asked and had to be answered, With all sincerity and so I did. Gist of what is as below.

There is a growing trend in India that the number of students applying for study in Arts faculty, including liberal arts is dwindling down. Many colleges do not have enough teachers in those domains too. World order needs not only commerce but all specialisations including linguistics,

liberal arts, fine arts, Pure science etc. Else, there won't be teachers to teach till college level. In-fact this is one of the reasons for setting up KVF. To assist students and faculty of these segments we ensured that there is a Center for linguistic studies, Center for Heritage Conservation and Center for Advanced Research etc to build opportunities for those aspiring for building skillsets in this segment.

There is also a disturbing trend in India that study of language, history, liberal arts, sculpting, drawing etc in India, in general. There are cosy elite institutes to teach these in urban centers. Many of the traditional art forms have died a natural death and gone away from the memory of its own clan. However the society of current times offer huge opportunity for those with adequate skillsets in this area.

1. Linguistic Studies:

Students have to focus their studies in all subjects of their study. including languages. Due to lackadaisical approach of the society and parents, students are giving importance to only core subjects and not to languages. This is adding to the cause of unemployable nature of the graduates for the reason that their oral and written communication skills are at abysmally low levels.

Students should be encouraged to do creative writing. Writing stories, poems, essays on their topic of interest, articles to journals etc and also participate in group discussions, elocution contests. This adds to the confidence levels of people to handle queries.

The arts students should also have a

provision to do research, a project study in their area of interest, which should carry marks for internal assessments.

Secondly the arts students should be encouraged to learn at-least one other language other than their mother tongue. This will help them in working with others in literary and research works.

Many of the research centers have innumerable manuscripts, paper scripts which need to be studied and published. These centers find it difficult to get resources proficient in two languages for their research related assignments. This is creating huge opportunities in the country.

2. System supported writing or what is traditionally known as type-writing needs to be revived. In research field, there is huge shortage of typists, to compile, collate information and help in reading through literature, make notes, translate to vernacular etc. Which require typists. With the advent of computers, traditional mechanical type writers have gone into oblivion, but any current requirements would still need typists, who can use the traditional standard key board and type flawlessly. KVF is coming out with a few programs in this direction.

3. New generation of “Language Teachers” need to be developed. They should aim at rewriting the curriculum for arts courses. India is a multi linguistic country and the beauty is that there are no border checks across states. People can move from one location to another in pursuit of opportunities. This very nature provides innumerable opportunities for language

experts to provide a supporting hand for the migrant population to adapt.

3. Research and Development units.

language experts can create a special space for themselves provided they have a good expertise in their field, in the areas of Research as Research Scholars in preserving literature, history, heritage, music, paintings and other art forms.

One issue researchers find in India is documentation. Now with the development of digital technology, this is happening. People with linguistic and technical skills have a greater role to play in the days to come.

4. Skill development in rural areas can be a reality only if the skilled people in arts background can reach out to the masses in semi-urban rural areas, as they can directly communicate with this segment. These skilled people can help in design and development of contents for these programs.

Conclusively, all is not bad. Now are the times of entrepreneurship. If there are skillsets, then huge number of opportunities can be generated for self and also to many who don't have the financial backup to venture into business. Koushal Vikas Foundation encourages students and teachers from arts background to get themselves involved in projects to build competencies.

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