

Two to tango: Power of dual qualifications

THE POWER OF ADVANCED QUALIFICATIONS FROM TOP-NOTCH INSTITUTIONS WAS NEVER UNDERMINED, BUT IN A HYPER-COMPETITIVE MARKET, TIME IS THE SCARCEST COMMODITY, WRITES **SIDDHARTH BALIGA**

In a modern volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, careers go much beyond topping the class and securing a plush job. Students, educational institutions and organisations are constantly evolving with the times as technology advances by the minute and several jobs of yesterday become obsolete today.

The power of advanced qualifications from top-notch institutions was never undermined, but in a hyper-competitive market, time is the scarcest commodity. Organisations want people with contemporary skills and the demand for hi-tech, highly skilled resources far outstrips the supply.


Students and institutions, of 21st century, have to be agile, nimble-footed and aligned to industry requirement. Dual degrees, double degrees, integrated programmes are the natural by-products of this industry demand. The IIT Bangalore, IIT Roorkee etc, for example, offer five-year MTech programmes that churn out job-ready candidates in five years as against the six years required, if the BTech and MTech is done separately. The duration could be more if candidates take a break after BTech to crack the GATE for entry into the MTech programme.

The global landscape calls for early international exposure as businesses go beyond borders and digital connectivity ensures colleagues across the world are

just a call away. These requirements have given birth to twinning programmes, exchange programmes and multiple degrees from partner universities.

The Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), offers twinning programmes in engineering in partnership with international universities. Students of these programmes spend two-years in Manipal and then visit to the partner university. Twinning programmes expose students to multiple cultures, enhance learning from varied faculty and give deeper insights into the subjects.

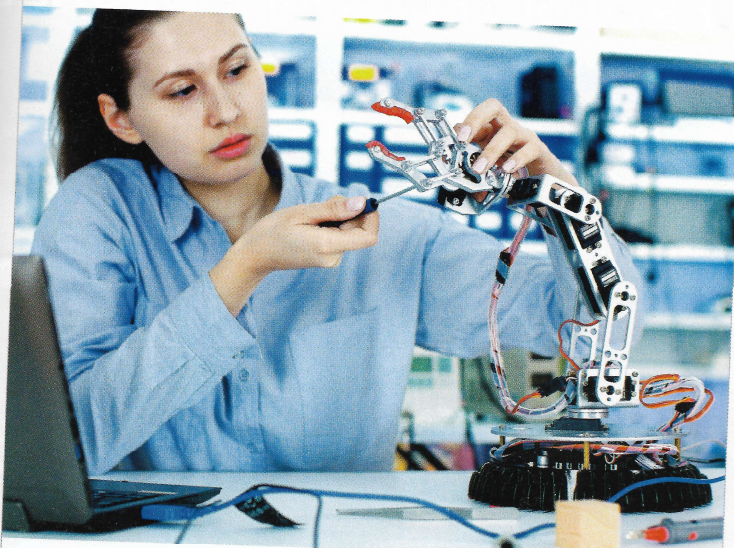
The Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC) in partnership with ESCR Europe, offers a dual post-graduate qualification in management, which again gives the much-needed global business exposure to the bud-



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ding managers. The participants study both at the IIMC and the ESCP, Paris, campus to acquire degrees or diplomas from both the institutions after the completion of course.

Open economy and free market create opportunities for unconventional careers and freelancers. Gig economy encourages outcome driven contracts rather than full-time jobs, which is appreciated by the millennials. It helps them maintain a work-life balance and pursue multiple projects at a time without being labelled a moonlighter.

Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dual degree programmes help lay a broader foundation of skills and make careers more sustainable in the long run. Multidisciplinary programs are already being offered in IITs where a student can opt for five-year master's degrees which include, say, an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering followed by computer science or management at the master's level. Interdisciplinary

programmes, that merge subjects of diverse departments, are yet to pick up steam in India but universities such as Shiv Nadar University seem to be headed in that direction with research interests and offerings in bioinformatics and cheminformatics.

Signalling theory also plays an important role in the mushrooming of twinning programmes, international collaborations and multi-country internships. Signalling theory emphasises at the importance of building positive perceptions that act as unique value propositions. Although organisations use analytical, logical and quantitative aptitude tests, as a process of elimination in recruitment, the eventual impact, of human perception, on the final decision, can no longer be discounted.

(The author an alumnus of MIT Manipal and IIM-K, is business head of Kredo)