



Liberal arts students during an activity in Ashoka University. Himi Purkayastha of the university told Sri Sri Academy students how liberal education would empower them with multidisciplinary, problem-solving and research-oriented skills

New jobs and 'liberal' outlook

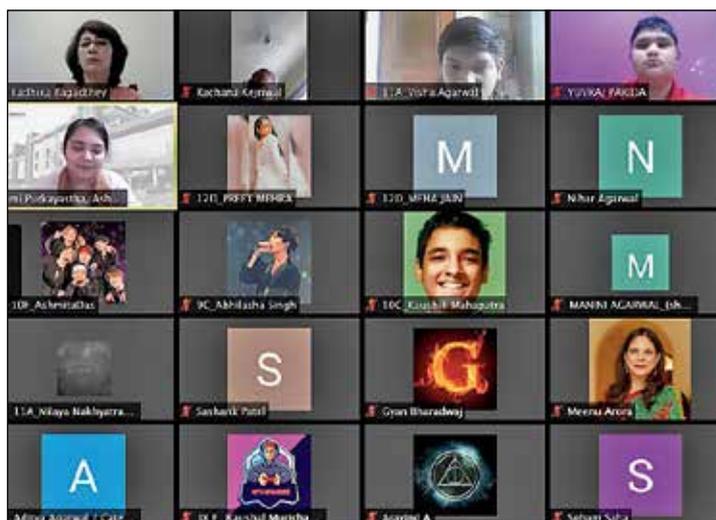
What is liberal education and how is it different from other courses — students of Sri Sri Academy are taken on a career tour to the future at an event conducted by the school's career guidance cell. **Young Metro** reports...

What's the difference between multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approach in education? Is it important to be employable or earnable? What is data storytelling? What is the future of the job situation in India?

Career-talks covering some burning contemporary issues were discussed at a panel talk organised by the career guidance cell of Sri Sri Academy, Calcutta for classes X, XI and XII on August 9.

About 500 students attended the discussion on "Liberal Education - An Interdisciplinary Approach". The speakers included Himi Purkayastha, regional manager (east), office of admissions and outreach, Ashoka University; Anju Deoskar, associate director of admissions outreach, Flame University and Meenu Arora, assistant director of Krea University.

The session began with Arora explaining the difference between multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approach in education. She took students through various stages of development from the first industrial revolution to the fourth one that spelt the emergence of artificial intelligence, big data, the Internet of Things, blockchain, crypto. "For the fifth industrial revolution effort is being made to humanise technology which requires higher cognitive skills like creativity, decision-making, critical thinking and complex information processing. Social and emotional skills such as effective



communication and negotiation, leadership, management and adaptability are becoming more important," she said.

Arora emphasised on "interwoven learning for an interconnected world". She also explained how the boundaries between digital, physical and biological world are fast disappearing. The new-age careers are a combination of various disciplines, she said. "We need to question every information we get," she said.

Arora stressed on data storytelling. A data scientist should not only be able to analyse data, but also present them in the right context.

Deoskar began by dispelling the notion that liberal arts is synonymous to humanities. She said it was a combination of all three streams — science,

commerce and humanities.

Deoskar mentioned that the students must not develop skills to make themselves employable but try to be earnable instead. She went on to explain that in today's world where everything was so uncertain it was, at times, not possible to plan long-term. Transferable skills such as leadership, verbal and written communication, team work, problem solving etc which the employers look out for should be honed to succeed in the unknown future. These skills may be acquired through engagement in various activities. Liberal education also helps to cultivate these skills.

"The students must be aware of current trends in the industry and be able to predict the future trends too irrespective of the



THE SPEAKERS: (Clockwise from top left) Meenu Arora, Himi Purkayastha and Anju Deoskar



streams they belong to," she said. According to her, liberal education is to break out of a box and have the freedom to learn anything, explore and prepare for life. She said critical thinking is to learn to question the question itself, which is one of the skills that are taught in a liberal arts course.

Purkayastha rounded up by sharing some statistics on the job scenario. "About 75 per cent of the jobs available now will be reinvented by next 10 to 15 years, 66 per cent of the companies will be looking for new sets of skills, 51.8 per cent of jobs will be robotically automated in India," she said.

Purkayastha cited instances of new-age jobs such as social media marketing or social media analysts or ethical hacking that have evolved in recent years and the experts in these fields can demand very high salaries. She explained the learning methodology in liberal education that empowers the students with multidisciplinary, problem-solving and research-oriented skills.

"The current education system does not empower a student to look at a problem from multi-dimensional aspects whereas liberal education does. It also helps in developing empathy and emotional intelligence that are considered prized skills," said Purkayastha. She mentioned that an added advantage of studying in a liberal arts university is the industry exposure and workshops that one gets to attend.

I was not aware of the scope of liberal arts. I was keen to know its career prospects. Himi Purkayastha's speech was an eye opener.
— **Sanjana Chatterjee**, Class XII



The session helped clear my doubts. I liked how Anju Deoskar explained the importance of analytical, problem-solving and verbal communication skills
— **Yashna Garg**, Class X



I now have many career options to choose from. Often we overlook courses that help our creativity bloom. The speakers were very good
— **Sreyoshi Roy Choudhury**, Class XI



I plan to pursue a career that involves computational skills and programming. I connected best with Himi Purkayastha's speech
— **Upkirat Singh Dhillon**, Class XI



The seminar was important. I had no idea what liberal education is. It made me think
— **Rajnish Prasad**, Class X



I learnt about new concepts. I found Anju Deoskar's speech especially inspirational
— **Vihaan Shah**, Class X



No learning goes waste. I put to use all the skills that I had learnt to create something new
— **Suvina Shunglu**, Principal

