

Substantial Edification: An Approach Headlong for North East India

¹Mr. Rahul Bhattacharya., ²Dr. Julian Oscar Dhar., ³Dr. Debmalya Bhattacharya

¹Student, Martin Luther Christian University, Shillong

²Deputy Registrar, MIT University of Meghalaya, Shillong

³Pro Vice Chancellor, MIT University of Meghalaya, Shillong

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1303000176>

Received: 21 March 2026; Accepted: 26 March 2026; Published: 12 April 2026

ABSTRACT

In the post-industrial era, the skill sets one obtained in college or a university served one for a lifetime an engineer, designer or science graduate who picked up his skills in college could hope to tap into them throughout his career. However, over time, the shelf life of skills has declined due to the absence of a fresh curriculum. The growing gap between curriculum and market demands is a major challenge for the higher education sector today and has led to a widening skills gap in the talent entering the market. For instance, next to China, India is the largest producer of STEM graduates—2.6 million in 2016 versus China's 4.7 million. However, according to the India skills report in 2019, only 47 per cent of the available talent is employable. This is reflected in the 2019 Deloitte Deans Survey: Only 28 per cent of the deans believe that their students are industry-ready. The main challenge with the current system is that it encourages students to approach their education vocationally—to think just in terms of the jobs they're preparing for. This is a contentious issue in today's educational system across the globe where the students, who put in years of learning, are justified in expecting to be employed at the end of it. On the other hand, a sole focus on employment, diminish the focus on learning. Academic institutions have become recruiting and vocational training centres for the personnel of consumer society, certifying citizens for service, while at the same time disposing of those adjudged unfit for the race. The Indian education system needs immediate attention in rote learning, evaluation system, equal respect to all the disciplines, the introduction of technology, experiential and practice-based education.

INTRODUCTION

The humans think in stories rather than in facts, numbers or equations and its imperative for business and entrepreneurship to make stories of ideas, product or services. 21st century is about humans, superhuman and artificial intelligence. Better we understand the biochemical mechanisms that underpin human emotions, desires and choices the better computers can get at analysing human behaviour, predicting human decisions and replacing human professions. The academic institutions should consider teaching the four C's; critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. More broadly academic institutions should limit the technical skills and emphasize general-purpose life skills. Most important of all is the ability to deal with change to learn new things and to preserve your mental and emotional balance in unfamiliar situations.

Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was a big critic of the country's traditional idea of education and labelled schools of his times as 'prisons', which put the natural impulses of a learner under lock and key, and tried to educate them through harsh discipline. The traditional education is mainly focused on textbooks, completely neglecting the learner's needs in the process. The Croatian-Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich, stated that, educational institutes have failed in addressing individual needs and encouraged misleading notions of progress and yardsticks for measuring the quality of human life. Institutions shall promote a liberal education approach that emphasises on the purpose of education and focuses upon values, wisdom and educate people to be a lifelong learner. It promotes the integration of learning across the cultures, disciplines, curriculum, and between academic and experiential learning, to develop learning outcomes that are essential for work and life. Questions must be asked as they drive a passion for learning and provide an understanding of the discipline in a historical capacity, even though it is hard to come up with answers that might delve deeper in the subject matter.

The job market is experiencing a compounding problem across the globe. With technological development accelerating, old-world jobs being created at an increasing rate. At the same time, new jobs being created to work alongside transitional technologies are going unfilled. There is a strong assumption that STEM jobs must be filled by STEM talent, and this is the core reason for resource crises as per the experts. These days' employers look at candidates can attempt the big think questions rather than those who have cultivated research skills specific to the disciplines. They look for an employee who can learn, and who have demonstrable critical, quantitative and communicational skills. These are the skills of a liberally educated student, not one who is immersed in disciplinary expertise. Graduates with liberal education philosophy bring a depth of knowledge from across the disciplines that complement the hard skills of engineers, designers and data scientist. The companies are partnering with liberal arts colleges like Trinity College and Rhode Island School of Design to train the workforce of the future. They believe, by recruiting candidates from a broad set of backgrounds and experiences who know how to learn and training them with the technological skills they need to succeed in today's economy, where these resources can become an even greater problem – finder and creative solution providers. As per the top recruiters, the best engineers are those who are deeply versed in and passionate about the philosophy, psychology and ethics. As technology becomes more pervasive and human-centric, professionals with expertise in social sciences are needed to understand how it is best used by individuals and societies. Human-computer interaction work relies on designers and anthropologist to do deep dives into technology from a user perspective, and how these insights can then be incorporated into technology. The liberal graduates develop different mental models than engineers and computers graduates which can be used to solve problems differently. By building a new hybrid talent pool, which draws on broad-based liberal foundation and promotes cognitive diversity, companies can leverage the arts and technology solutions together. Most of the content creators, writer, PR managers, social media handlers, and UI/UX designers are from a liberal education background. There are two ends in the technology industry that have to work in tandem to deliver what a solution promises. One is the pure technology and other at user's end i.e. they Alchemist, this layer act as a catalyst in many cases.

Liberal Education Indian Context

In India, the concept of a dedicated liberal arts education is a fairly new one. In India, term liberal arts has been a little loosely applied to define academic disciplines. This means that two separate ways of administering an education are referred to as studying 'liberal arts'. Subjects that fall under the understanding of arts, as well as humanities and social sciences, have all come to be called 'liberal arts.' This applies to single honours degrees like a BA in English, Philosophy, Psychology, etc. and also to triple major programmes. The degree earned is Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Arts (Honours). A pure liberal arts degree that follows the multidisciplinary approach to study. It neatly blends a holistic, skill and thought-based approach along with a focussed, domain-specific education that would serve specific needs (addressed by choosing of majors and minors).

A liberal arts education in India breaks away from the conventional way that regular humanities, arts and social sciences courses are taught. Subjects are divided into foundation or mandatory courses, majors and minors. Though individual colleges and universities have different ways of structuring the course of your degree, what remains constant is foundation or core courses, majors and minors, electives and co-curricular courses. Pursuing an education in liberal arts is beneficial as it exposes you to a series of practical experiences that make you a well-rounded individual, not boxed in by the principles and praxis of a single discipline. It does not result in students who are a jack of all trades and master of none, but the course is designed in such a way that, it grants you enough exposure at the early stage. This plays an integral role in helping learners to discover exactly what are your strengths, weaknesses, inclinations and affinity lies. In the current context, numerical humanities and social sciences is a vibrant and interdisciplinary field devoted to promoting the opportunities of computing for humanities and social sciences subjects including anthropology, art, communication, history, literature, linguistics, philosophy, and political science, among others. This social sciences major is a combined degree program where students obtain a sturdy underpinning in perilous thinking, ethnic consciousness, and communication. The major is inimitable, pairing a traditional liberal arts education with study in digital

technology, human-computer interaction, database management, geographic information technologies, and interactivity in new media.

Cardinal tools harmonizing with computing further the considerate and study of anthropology, communication, culture, literature, linguistics, history, and the arts. The digital humanities and social sciences major is a vibrant and interdisciplinary field of research dedicated to furthering the potentials of computing for humanities and social sciences subjects including anthropology, art, communication, history, literature, linguistics, philosophy, and political science, among others. The Indian education system as a whole has several fundamental problems in the way that science, design, engineering, arts, humanities and social science are taught. The few identified problems are critical thinking is not introduced as a concept or taught as a daily approach to solving problems, lack of research in the curriculum, and not enough attention to in-depth research, strictly dividing the disciplines such as design, sciences, arts, management, humanities, etc., giving importance to obedience and discipline over asking questions, explorations and self-expression.

The concept of liberal education as necessary for the development of a scientific attitude, which is in turn necessary for the progress of man and society in general and of Indian society in particular.

According to liberal education, it is possible to uplift Indian society from age-old afflictions, responsible for its degenerate conditions, through the process of education alone. The type of liberal education considered most necessary for Indian society was 'man-making education', which would lead to nation-building. In this point of view, this type of education had the capacity for the social regeneration of Indian society because it was supposed to have the potential of purging the human mind of mental decadence, that is, the tendency towards ignorance, laziness and a resigned attitude which accepts anything that is prescribed without personal reflection. The prevailing unscientific attitude had to be replaced by a scientific attitude, whose constituents were objectivity, rationality and a critical temper. Without the inculcation of a critical, scientific attitude it is not possible to bring about the social and economic regeneration of Indian society. So to achieve this end Swami Vivekananda drew out a social philosophy from the Vedanta, which -was both, dynamic and practical. In the social context, the development of a scientific outlook, implies the development of a humanistic attitude which is impartial and free from the clutches of individual differences of caste, community, race, religion and nationality, and from dogmatic, irrational beliefs and practices. It is a profound conviction that such a development of the human self could be achieved through education, which involved the training of the physical and mental self with the aim of elevating both, to the highest level. The concept of liberal education, thus, gives an extremely dignified, optimistic and realistic picture of the human personality.

This sense of education does not see it as confined to the classroom. It is not the prerogative of the teacher alone to provide education. It can be obtained from all individuals, even from nature. Considered from this standpoint, it can be said that the child imbibes education not only from his teacher, but also from the entire complexity of his environment, each object in which is a means of educating him. With this definition of education, it must be granted that the subjects of education cannot be determined for they are far too numerous. Education comprehends all human individuals, of all sizes and ages, races and groups. Education in both, narrow and liberal senses, is essential for a complete development of the individual. A formally educated individual is not necessarily better developed, but he is definitely better informed than the average uneducated person. Besides he develops the ability to imbibe education, as it is meant in its more liberal sense. Also it would be worthwhile to consider the Western approach to education.

Education From India's Northeast Perspective

The meaning of education in the tribal societies of northeast India must not be kept limited as to make students able to get a job that feeds them and the dependents. However, the education system and the institutions will have to play a larger role in facilitating students to visualize the greater opportunity for employment in diverse sectors and entrepreneurship in the region. Every year a large number of students from North East region migrates to other states in the country to have a good quality higher education. At present, the world-class

institutions in the northeast region are limited, and most of the colleges and universities lack in basic technical and research facilities. The present system of higher education does not serve the purpose for which it has been started. The North-Eastern region comprising eight states viz. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim is an important entity due to its diversity and rich legacy culture. The literacy rate in many of these states is above the rest of the country though, the core problems of higher education in the region are, inadequate physical infrastructure, theoretical and age-old curriculum, limited focus on the establishment of good institutions, no institution provide multi-cultural, a multi-disciplinary course with an experiential learning approach, lack of industrial exposure and outflow of the local students to other parts of the country. Hence there is a strong need for more innovative academic pedagogy, which will address not only the societal needs also, will bring a more practical approach, holistic learning.

Modern times are known as the most turbulent times. Social, economic, political and technological conditions are fast changing and these changing will have far reaching impact on future. Some future prospects of higher education in north east India are as follows:

- Diversification is taking place to meet the new needs. Numbers of specialized institutions have come up to meet the specialized needs of specific population. This is because of expansion of student population. At the same time, academic system has become more stratified. Therefore, diversification will also be an important challenge in the coming decades.
- Moreover, Research and publication of journals and books is an important issue now. Issues of access, communication, control and technology are intertwined which would gain lot of importance in the years to come.
- In the present situation in North East India, more emphasize is given on girls education. So, we are expecting more women colleges and university increase in future in North East India.
- Higher educational institutions will sign MOU and different foreign universities. As a result, universities of north eastern states have campus and study centers of those foreign institutions. Students will also benefit from these by getting scholarship and opportunities to learn in foreign universities.

Liberal Education strives to deliver an academic experience that fosters intellectual curiosity, a critical thought process, self-reflection, leadership and teamwork skills, a sense of commitment and professionalism and a heightened sensitivity to one's socio-cultural environment. It lays emphasis on the creation of a learning environment where the student takes the responsibility of learning and the role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Numerical humanities and social sciences is a vibrant and interdisciplinary field devoted to promoting the opportunities of computing for humanities and social sciences subjects including anthropology, art, communication, history, literature, linguistics, philosophy, and political science, among others. This social sciences major is a combined degree program where students obtain a sturdy underpinning in perilous thinking, ethnic consciousness, and communication. The major is inimitable, pairing a traditional liberal arts education with study in digital technology, human-computer interaction, database management, geographic information technologies, and interactivity in new media.

Cardinal tools harmonizing with computing further the considerate and study of anthropology, communication, culture, literature, linguistics, history, and the arts. The digital humanities and social sciences major is a vibrant and interdisciplinary field of research dedicated to furthering the potentials of computing for humanities and social sciences subjects including anthropology, art, communication, history, literature, linguistics, philosophy, and political science, among others.

REFERENCES

1. Shaping the Future: Delivering on the promise of Indian higher education 2019 – Deloitte
2. Indian Higher Education Sector: Opportunities aplenty, growth unlimited 2019- Deloitte
3. Toward student-centricity, Revamping Indian higher education for the future of work - Deloitte
4. Perspectives in Higher Education 2019 – PwC
5. The state of higher education: Challenges and Opportunity 2019 – PwC
6. National Education Policy – 2020
7. Newman's Idea of a University and its relevance for the 21st century – Australian journal of Theology 18.1
8. Association of American Colleges & Universities
9. 21 Lessons for the 21st Century by Yuval Noah Harari
10. College: Pathways of Possibilities by Prof. Saikat Majumdar
11. 7 immediate changes needed in the Indian education system – India Today
12. <https://www.livemint.com/education/news/new-education-policy-five-big-changes-in-school-higher-education-explained-11596098141333.html>
13. <https://hbr.org/2017/07/liberal-arts-in-the-data-age>
14. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/why-tech-companies-are-hiring-people-with-humanities-degrees/articleshow/74828373.cms>
15. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/27/the-critical-skill-liberal-arts-grads-provide-to-the-stem-industry.html>
16. <https://www.thehillstimes.in/featured/education-system-and-future-of-children-in-ne-india/>
17. <https://wenr.wes.org/2018/09/education-in-india>