

Why being multilingual is helping youngsters find varied jobs

Learning a foreign language and speaking it fluently can give you a competitive edge

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With increasing globalisation and youngsters exploring jobs overseas, it is better to learn an additional international language besides English and the mother tongue.

“Whatever you want to convey, you have to use words to convey it. Even if you speak in sign language, words are still present as thoughts in your mind. There is no concept in this universe, which can be conveyed without words. When a child takes birth, the linguistic potential is already inherent in him. According to the Indic belief systems, the world is created through words, Shabd Brahmnn,” says Hari Ram Mishra, professor, School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies, JNU

Window to the world

Knowledge of a foreign language is also our window to the world that provides us innumerable and interesting career opportunities. “When you learn more than one language, you also get to know more about people from different countries/cultures,” says Kumari Rohini, assistant professor, Korean Language Programme, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. Rohini hails from a lower-middle-class family in Bihar and came to Delhi to learn Korean. She says learning Korean offered her several avenues to travel to Korea and learn about its culture.

Culture is an intrinsic aspect of any language. “Once you learn about other languages and culture, you get to know your own culture better. There are a lot of opportunities language courses create for you. You can teach in schools and universities, work in government agencies such as IB. In the private sector, candidates can work in multinational corporates or freelance as translator and interpreter as well,”

says Sanjay Jha, assistant professor, Centre for Korean Studies, JNU, Delhi.

In the digital age of online learning, universities and companies are hiring language experts for curating content. “For instance, if a Korean university is offering a course for a worldwide audience, they will need translators. Voiceover artists who know different languages are also much in demand. We know machine translation is becoming a reality, but even then tech companies will need a human to understand subtle nuances of words and their usages that a machine might not be able to do,” explains Rohini, talking about language translating apps.

Learning a foreign language and speaking it fluently can give you a competitive edge in the US and UK. “Our society is global, when students apply for jobs in the US and they are fluent in Spanish and English, for instance, Spanish is the second most spoken language in the US, it opens various doors for jobs. Universities prefer those who speak more than one language,” says Kareena Aswani, founder, Acing Languages, a startup that offers language courses taught by native speakers.

Talking about the benefits of multilingualism, Aswani says, “Firstly, you can travel the world and speak in local languages, you are also able to form connections with local people,” The ability to talk in different languages is a skill in demand. “Through this, expanding businesses in different geographies is relatively easier. When an individual is competent in several languages, it enhances his confidence,” says Arindam Das, associate professor, Alliance School of Business, Bangalore.

