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Despite the plurality of choices one has, *Kavitha Srinivasa* finds out that some students follow their heart's calling and go that extra mile to serve people

LISTEN TO YOUR HEART

and reach out!

**“THE** MBA course teaches us to manage within our resources. I'm inclined towards HR and since I'm also interested in social service, I would like to work in an NGO,” said 24-year-old Garima Doshi, a final year MBA student.

Doshi represents a growing number of MBA students keen to work in NGOs. “NGOs today are much more than a not-for-profit organisation. Their commitment and the mode of operation are more structured than before. This creates a need for managerial competence, which B-schools students have. It's a mutually agreeable career option,” said Madhumita Chatterji, Chairperson (Academics), IFIM B-School in Bangalore.

The B-School curriculum equips students to understand the cultural, political, economic and environmental contexts of management. This comes in handy while running an NGO and that's how management schools have a social work module. XLRI School of Business and Human Resources, Jamshedpur and IIFT (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi) have community service programmes. IIFT's initiative Koshish organises blood donation campaigns and XLRI students attend village camps. The Institute of Rural Management in Gujarat provides students management training for rural development. “NGOs are no longer traditional setups. They can be large institutions with a company like setup and committed to a social cause. MBA graduates are hired to work in market research, create business development plans, HR, manage funds and interact with the government,” added Chatterji.

Moving beyond B-schools, colleges have integrated a CSR (community social responsibility) programme into their curriculum. Symbiosis Institute for Media and Communication has a social communication module. “Trainees undergo an eight week internship with an NGO based in India, Middle East and South Asia. Around 250 students intern in Indian NGOs. Some also intern in the Grameen Bank microfinance in Dhaka, Dubai, Nepal and work in Tibetan groups in Dharmsala, Himachal Pradesh. They're trained in advocacy campaign, social survey, communication workshop skills, documentary filmmaking and website design, before the NGO project,” said Prof Ujjwal Kumar Chowdhury, Symbiosis Institute for Media and Communication, Pune and Bangalore.

Freshers can work as social welfare officers, co-coordinators, committee organisers, teachers, volunteers, mentors, executives or managers in NGOs, with a monthly start up salary of around Rs 6,000. “I'm doing an MBA because of its CSR module. My organising skills have improved and I've interacted with entrepreneurs. Eventually I want to start an NGO,” explained Rosh K Joy, an international business student.

Diploma or degree courses are offered in institutes like The Indian Institute of

Social Welfare and Business Management in Kolkata, Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, Mangalore University, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum and Madras School of Social Work, Chennai.

Students also have the option of joining international NGOs like World Wildlife Fund, UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO and AMNESTY. “Our students work in NGOs and developmental agencies twice a week. Initially they go in groups, after which they work individually in villages and health sectors. After completing four semesters, they are ready to start a career. Annually around 3 per cent start their own NGOs, others work in community development and counseling centres,” said Dr Shobhadevi R Patil, head of department of social work, Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka.

Students can also double up as NGO volunteers on weekends. “Volunteering activities in CRY happens on weekends. We facilitate the activities. Volunteers

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form Public Action Groups, take up issues relating to child rights and try to build a movement in their localities to address the issues,” explained Sahaya Teresa, Manager - Communications, CRY.

The ability to think beyond oneself urges youngsters to lend their hand. Like Richa Taneja, a volunteer at NGOs like Maraa and Women's Collision for Peace and Development. “I was interested in women's and children's rights. My work has exposed me to many prejudices in society. Since I have a Mass Communication background, I want to go into villages and make documentaries to sensitize the masses,” reasoned Taneja.

Centre for Social Action (CSA) an initiative of Christ College has around 150 volunteers. Vikas Programme, a CSA activity enables students to visit rural areas, urban slums and NGOs. “Students are involved in community outreach activities organised by the university in association with different NGOs. The assignments range from volunteer coordination, event planning, execution, basic administration and field survey. Around 20-100 students participate in the activities,” explained Dr R Chennraj Jain, Chairman, Jain Group of Institutions, Chancellor - Jain University.

When students have plurality of choices, some follow their heart's calling and go that extra mile to serve people.

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