

DNA 25/09/2010

THEY ARE WILLING TO IGNORE PRESTIGIOUS AND LUCRATIVE DISCIPLINES LIKE MEDICINE TO DO RESEARCH WORK

Pure science aspirants grow three-fold in four years

Mihika Basu

Mayank Singh opted to pursue a career in pure sciences at the Centre for Excellence in Basic Sciences (CBS), Mumbai, over electronics and electrical engineering. Similarly, instead of pursuing an MBBS course, Karthika KJ also joined CBS.

Mayank and Karthika are among the growing breed of students across India who are keen on studying basic sciences instead of the more conventional programmes like engineering or medicine.

And in the process they are breaking the widely-held perception that there are few takers for pure sciences. Statistics speak for itself. For instance, there is a three-fold

FACTS & PERSPECTIVES

- ▶ Students are opting for courses on pure sciences as opposed to specialised curriculums like Medicine and Engineering
- ▶ Educationists attribute this trend to the growing aspiration among students to become scientists and researchers
- ▶ By promoting pure sciences, CBS is ambitious of becoming a role model for other universities to emulate



Number of aspirants over the years

2007	5,800	2009	16,000
2008	8,000	2010	18,000

rise in pure science aspirants since 2007 at CBS and National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), Bhubaneswar. From 5,800 applicants in 2007, it went up to 18,000 in 2010.

The National Entrance Screening Test (Nest) is the entry level test for CBS and NISER.

"The popularity of basic sciences is on a rise. Basic sciences are absolutely es-

sential in all fields, be it medicine, technology, bio-sciences or genetic engineering," said RV Hosur, CBS director.

CBS is a joint initiative between the Department of

Atomic Energy (DAE) and Mumbai University. It is located at Mumbai University's Kalina campus. NISER is also a DAE initiative.

While 20 students were admitted last year at CBS, this year the number is 30. Around 60 students have enrolled themselves at NISER.

"An MBBS programme would have focused only on specific aspects, whereas I want to explore biology in detail and focus on research. Hence, my decision to join CBS which will expose me to fundamental science, the basis for exploring any technology," said Karthika.

Jyotirmoy Roy, another student who has joined CBS this year, said his interest lies with physics and not lucra-

tive jobs. "There's a fun element in physics which you don't find in an MBA or an engineering programme. A lot of work is being done abroad in basic sciences. India should also concentrate on pure sciences since this country has an abundance of talent," said Roy.

CBS currently offers a five-year integrated MSc programme. "It's very encouraging that students are getting drawn towards basic sciences. What's significant is that our student strength is diverse and some come from remote parts of India. We hope to become a model to be replicated in other universities in the country," said SM Chitre, chairman, academic board, CBS.