

Start earning while you learn

CHANGING TRENDS The idea of students working part-time is catching up in India with a number of student-centric opportunities opening up.

V Pradeep Kumar details the advantages of earning even as you work towards an academic qualification

Are you in college dreaming big? Are you finding it a challenge to finance your education? Do you have spare time and don't know what to do with it? If so, read on.

Soumya, a college student aspires to work in the highly lucrative hospitality industry. She has already begun working part-time in a restaurant.

Avinash, from another city college, wants to make it big in the media. He works part-time for a prominent newspaper as a Relation Executive.

The idea of working part-time in cafes, food-courts, gas stations etc. while doing a course is no longer restricted to the US, Europe or Australia. It's common to see college students employed in part time work in India too. Indeed, if you are ambitious and can invest spare time productively, there are opportunities galore, in many interesting sectors.

Why look for part-time jobs?

There could be many motives for students to look for part-time jobs. Self-financing collegiate education is a vital factor, in view of rising costs. Many students I spoke to, also mentioned excitement and addition to pocket income, as motivating factors. Influence of friends and peer pressure, is another factor.

Choices unlimited

If you are looking for a part-time job, the variety is astounding. With options to work from home or outdoor, work daily or just the weekends, choosing is fast and easy. What's more? If you have a career plan, like Soumya or Avinash, you can take up an appropriate job and kick-start your career right away!

Get the right job

How do you explore the jobs available and choose the one that suits your interest and spare time, judiciously? Here's a quick update on the variety and nature of work, to help you in the process.

■ **Data base management:** Marketing companies maintain a database to communicate marketing information to potential clients. This database is dynamic and hence needs continuous verification and updating. This requires contacting individuals or companies as per the database and updating the records of their profile on hard copy or online. This is a job done generally from home.

■ **Hospitality:** Restaurants, cafes and fast-food joints have opportunities in billing and delivery. The job profile is to greet customers with a smile and service them. You can customise these jobs to suit your spare time. You may also find a job close to your home or college.

■ **Offices:** Many organisations are looking at methods to cut fixed overhead costs. Hence, a number of office jobs are now available part-time, with both front-end

and back-end operations.

■ **Content creation and management:** There are opportunities in the field of writing, translation, digitising content etc. for organisations and websites. You can choose a project and complete it within an agreed deadline. Such jobs are possible to do from the comfort of your home.

■ **Teaching:** Depending on your current profile, start teaching in coaching classes or handle private tuitions at home. Apart from being a noble profession, it's a good way to sharpen your knowledge too.

■ **Retail:** Retailing as an industry has come a long way, with many international players entering the Indian market. Promoting brands, services and shopping malls to potential customers is the nature of the job. Currently, this is a hyper-active area with tremendous opportunities.

■ **Events/Exhibitions:** Events, exhibitions and seminars are new marketing media bringing communities together. In such events, the job of a host/hostess is to greet and welcome guests. Depending on the event, they may also have to discharge additional responsibility that may be as simple as escorting them to a preferred seating area, or explaining a product feature.

■ **Media:** In the last decade, we have seen the media industry developing and playing the important role of disseminating information and creating awareness. Whether it's newspapers, television or new media like the internet and social media, these are aggressively promoted. These media target youth and hence students constitute an ideal community to promote them. For you, this presents a wonderful opportunity to get a glimpse of the media, apart from enjoying the benefits of a part-time job.

The advantage is all yours

The benefits of a part-time job are multiple and taking it enhances your overall personality.

■ **Discipline and responsibility:** All jobs have certain responsibilities attached. For example, as a Relation Executive for a newspaper, you would contact readers to elicit feedback or promote subscription. If you work for a fast-food joint, you will work for a specified number of hours, following definite business etiquette. A part-time job is an effective method to understand responsibilities and inculcate self-discipline.

■ **Time management:** Think of all those tasks that are neither urgent nor important on which you cur-

rently invest time. Part-time jobs are a positive way to use spare time, balancing your studies and work. Thus, you understand the basic principles of time management, which makes life interesting and satisfying.

■ **First income:** Whether you use it for your education,

home or personal needs, the excitement of your first income is awesome. A part-time job adds to your pocket income, which can be very decent, if you choose right.

■ **Acquire new skills:** The most important aspect of a part-time job is the skills you acquire due to training and while on the job. For example, if it's a call centre job, you will fine-tune your spoken language; if it's a host/hostess job, you

will understand business etiquette and so on. These are important skills to acquire, as they are valuable in professional and personal life.

■ **Get mature and independent:** As a student, you get emotional and financial support from parents and remain protected. The biggest benefit of a part-time job is the feel of real world challenges. The perspective of life changes as you deal with these challenges, making you

independent and mature. Your parents will be the happiest to see these positive changes in you. Ramachandran, father of Avinash, agrees, "I was surprised to see the sea change in Avinash after he started working for a newspaper. Now he gets up early and because of the job profile, keeps himself abreast of current affairs". Avinash is excited too and explains, "My educational expenses were rising. I didn't want to be a

burden on my parents". The variety in part-time jobs is indeed fascinating. Just relax and think of all the options that are close to your heart and make a judicious choice. These jobs can get you anything in the range of Rs 3000 to Rs 10,000 per month. Many HR experts endorse the idea of students taking up part-time jobs as the soft skills acquired give them an edge over others in the selection process for a regular job. Despite the attraction of money

and benefits of experience, some parents may be averse to this idea and hence get their concurrence.

Working part-time is neither a bane nor a shame in current times. On the contrary, a part-time job opens up your mind to the sea of opportunities around and is an effective method to build your personality. It fuels your aspirations to succeed and helps you and your family build resources for a career that you are passionate about.

