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STUDENT DEBATE



Manaswini Prasanna, Anurima Ghosh, Apoorva Ramachandran, Ujjwala Varma, Priyadarshini Patwa, Mohammad Yashab Abbas, Pawan, Amit Antony and Anjul Hans fought a good verbal duel

THE VERDICT: KNOWLEDGE BEATS SKILLS

College students fiercely debated on whether skilling or wholesome development holds the key to individual growth

KAVIYA SANJEEVI | CHENNAI

Drawing examples of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Kamaraj, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, the student debate on 'Skill building is the raison d'etre of education' brought out vital points that answered the questions 'Whether it is skills or subject knowledge that is important for survival?' The debaters were Ayush Bhargava, IIT-Madras; Apoorva Ramachandran, Stella Maris College for Women; Anjul Hans, Great Lakes Institute of Management; Ujjwala Varma, Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute; Priyadarshini Patwa, Asian College of Journalism; Pawan, who goes by his first name, SASTRA University; Anurima Ghosh, MOP Vaishnav College for Women; Amit Antony, Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai-campus; Manaswini Prasanna, Women's Christian College and Mohammad Yashab Abbas, SRM University.

Ayush who was for the topic pointed out how one needs skills to perform day-to-day activities. "Skill can be defined as the ability to perform a complex activity. With life skills one can experiment and broaden his/her mind." Apoorva speaking against the topic said skill building as a goal will be ineffective and detrimental to society, "Knowledge in all its various forms is the raison d'etre of education. Skill building can be acquired with proper knowledge and practice over time and it is just a by-product of knowledge."

Stressing on the need for skill building, Anjul, said, "IIMs, Commercial Pilot training institutes, Air Hostess training schools and the Indian Maritime Academy, all build skills. They train you and prepare you for the job." While Anjul was all for skill building, Amit, said that education should impart wisdom, ethics and morals and gaining skills is just a check box while gaining knowledge. Manaswini, who spoke for the topic said, "We know that education will help us develop social, personal, soft and interpersonal skills. These are the basic skills we need to survive." Priyadarshini, who also spoke for the topic, supported this argument and said that "Knowledge is not enough for cognitive thinking. If we don't build the necessary skills, then the education system will collapse."

The winner of the debate, Ujjwala, who spoke against the topic, said "The imparting of information and academic knowledge is the raison d'etre of education. Skill is just an off-shoot of academic knowledge." She said that we need to be job creators and skill is only a valuable accessory. "Only if a person has a strong grounding in knowledge will he/she be exposed to various disciplines for skill building." Ayush and Apoorva were declared the runners-up. The students received their prizes from Smriti Irani, Union HRD Minister.

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Clockwise from top Ujjwala Varma (winner of the debate) of Chettinad Hospital and Research Institute; Apoorva Ramachandran of Stella Maris College and Ayush Bhargava of IIT-Madras (both runners-up), receiving their prizes from Union HRD Minister Smriti Irani



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