society. I want to create awareness through my stories.

With government spending on social sector schemes going up every year, social work courses are back on the options list. Although social work is available at the undergraduate level in some universities, students mostly opt for master's programmes.

"It is a very good programme for people who intend to do social activism and developmental work. This gives you an opportunity to respond to the needs of poor, the marginalised and disadvantaged. Work opportunities could be in government or non-government organisations working at the micro and macro levels," says Professor Keerti Jha of Patna Women's College.

Science, which has typically been about physics, chemistry and biological subjects, has now seen the emergence of new streams such as food technology, nutrition and dietetics in the past couple of years. While, they are nowhere in the league of most popular options, students are testing waters in these streams as well.

"People tend to think of these subjects as home science, but these are different technologies altogether. There is a growing demand for experts in food preservation and technology, especially with the increased awareness on health and hygiene," says Dr Anand K. Seth, professor, Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology, Punjab.

For Saurabh Bhardwaj, it was his interest in biotechnology that drew him towards food technology. "I had biotech in school. My teacher told me that it is related to biotech and has good potential. What excites me about food technology is the possibility of creating new products and food chemicals," says Saurabh, who is pursuing BSc. in food technology from Bhaskaracharya Institute of Applied Sciences, New Delhi. Saurabh plans to go into research after the course.

Since food and nutrition complement each other, Mysore University and Calcutta University offer a single course in food and nutrition. Mysore University also offers a diploma course in food technology.

In engineering, the preference continues to be for electronics, mechanical engineering and IT, but for students who want to take up something different, petroleum engineering could be a good option, say experts.

"A relatively new branch, it holds immense potential with India's growing consumption of petroleum and petroleum products. However, it is an expensive course because the course requires a lot of experiments and equipment. A B.Tech in petroleum engineering can cost ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh," says Dr Pratyush Chawla of
time and energy of applying to a master’s programme.

IIM Indore has a five-year integrated programme in management. Similarly, IIT Madras has started a five-year integrated programme leading to a MA in economics, development studies and English studies.

However, Malhotra cautions: “You should go for an integrated programme only if you are very sure that you want to have a career in the particular subject. Otherwise, studying it for five years and then feeling disenchanted is of no use. It is an interesting concept and a lot of students after 12th are going for it.”

Universities like Shiv Nadar University have started the trend of interdisciplinary courses. For example, Kritika, who is pursuing electronics engineering at Shiv Nadar University says the best part about its BE programme is that she also gets to study subjects from humanities like English and economics. “It is very different from the usual BE programmes that my friends in other colleges are doing,” says Kritika.

It has the concept of major and minor courses where students graduate in a particular subject, but are also required to study other subjects opted as minor. So, even humanities students get to study science. In addition to this, all the undergraduate programmes at SVN are of four years. Environment and sustainability and plagiarism ethics are essential components of the course structure.

“It is a very interesting concept, although it is nothing new. This is similar to the American practice of liberal education, where, if you study medicine, you can also study films or arts alongside. It gives you a well-rounded education,” says Malhotra.

Should students bite the bait of foreign tie-ups of Indian colleges? Experts advise a strict no, and even if someone is falling for it, one should check the quality of foreign university with which the college