



Interview Date: 4th Nov' 2016

Mathew George is currently pursuing his Master of Arts in Education from Azim Premji University. He graduated from Mar Ivanios College, Trivandrum with a Bachelor's Degree in Botany. We interviewed him to understand what made him pick an interdisciplinary program like ours. Mathew also shares his experiences here at Azim Premji University.

Q: The general trend is to choose a program related to your Bachelor's. Could you tell us what made you choose M.A in Education. Was it easy to convince your family about your new chosen path?

A: I chose science for my under graduation, but when it came to choose my PG, I was on lookout for programs that will help understand the society and be able to contribute towards social change. I did not want to be confined in a lab. During my graduation, I was actively involved in NSS and similar community connect activities – We visited homes and taught children with special needs. This probably triggered the need to look for programs outside the conventional degrees. It was struggle to convince my neighbours and extended family more than my family. They were not aware about such a programme. I also had offers for other programmes such as M.Sc. Fisheries, M.Sc. Food and Dairy Engineering in Chennai based college and MSW in another reputed university in Bangalore.

Q: Where did you first hear about Azim Premji University?

A: My senior in Mar Ivanios College had told about this University. I applied a year after that.

Q: The transition between learning a pure science subject to social Science. How was that journey?

A: Initially it was huge challenge. It was difficult to understand the basic concepts of Social Science.

The Core courses in the first semester paved a good foundation and initiation to the world of Social Sciences. We have weekly field visits (practicums) as part of the course curriculum. This was the key factor in helping me understand the concepts and moreover a quick opportunity to connect theory with practice.

I spent a lot of time with the faculty apart from regular classes, which also helped me. I have travelled a lot as part of the programme - Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan. This can only happen with such programmes which has an Integrated Field practice component. The student diversity of the University is beyond comprehension and interesting discussions with them helped that transition.

Q: If you have to look back, do you think you have changed as a person?

A: Yes! I did not have an idea about social Science. We were restricted to labs and reports, we had no idea about the society. Today, I am able to appreciate the effort that goes in to a lot of things, especially when it comes to education. I am able to link Science in Social Science in a unique way.

Q: Have you opted for a specialization?

A: Yes, I have opted for Curriculum & Pedagogy specialisation and doing Science Pedagogy. I have also opted for Curricular Material Development in the fourth Semester as my Electives. The wide range of Electives in the 2nd Year of the programme is a big plus here.

Q: Where are you Interning this year?

A: I am Interning with KSSP (Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad). I will be doing a comparative study for them between two schools. One in Kochi and the other in Kottayam. The Field internship work is for 6 weeks.

Q: What job options are you looking at?

A: I am excited about the upcoming placement cycle. Initially, I had no idea what kind of jobs one can do after pursuing M.A in Education. In the programme I am glad to have linked my science background with education. I hope to get placed on similar roles.

Q: Do you think students in Kerala or any other state are aware about inter disciplinary Courses?

A: General trend is to pursue post-graduation in the same stream. Awareness about inter-disciplinary courses like this is slowly increasing in some parts of Kerala. The career avenues and the career path in the education sector also needs to be explained.

Q: Do you think studying or pursuing a specific degree is required for the Social Sector?

A: People study electronics to design electronic circuits and they spend 4-5 years for that Professional degree. Similarly, we need to understand the society, various social constructs before we start intervening. A good grasp of the chosen domain of Education, Livelihood, Health & Nutrition, Public Policy etc. is absolutely necessary. It is imperative to understand how these factors impact the society to actually contribute to its development. While knowledge about society can be obtained by reading books, experiencing the situation live through field work is what validates that knowledge.

Mathew is currently doing his Field Internship in the schools of Kochi and Kottayam, Kerala. He can be contacted at mathew.george15@apu.edu.in or <http://facebook.com/mathew.mattathil>