

express exclusive

Few takers for varsity's basic science courses

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IN what might be a bleak prognosis for the development of the basic sciences, there are indications of a sharp decline in the numbers of students opting for the sciences in Bangalore University. The BSc course at the University is offered in 66 different combinations by the 110 colleges affiliated to Bangalore University. Enrolment data obtained by *The Express* reveals a sharp decline in the number of students opting for the various science combinations.

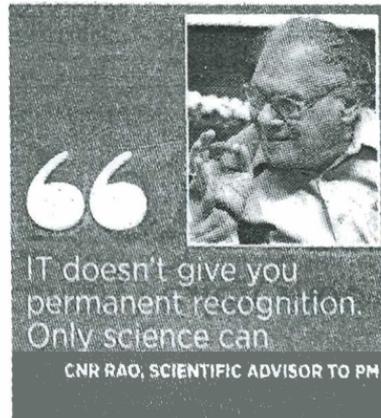
Only 10 students enrolled last year for first year BSc course (Physics, Mathematics and Statistics). This course did not have a single enrolment in 2006. Similarly, for the course which combines Chemistry, Botany and Environmental Science, only 14

students enrolled in 2005. In the past two years, there have been no enrolments in this course. Statistics also reveal that combinations with new subjects like Computer Science, Electronics, Bio-technology and Genetics draw many more students.

Post graduation degrees in the basic sciences are also in low demand. The University offers 60 students admission for the MSc in Zoology, but only 40 students enrolled last year. Prof Ramachandra Mohan of the department said that while, earlier, over 400 applicants wished to compete for the 60 seats available, the number of applicants has now dwindled to 150. Dr B Eraiah of the Physics department too noticed similar trends: despite the enormous job opportunities available to students of Physics, student enrolment has declined. While there were at least 500 applications

for the 60 seats available for a post graduation degree at the department earlier, there are seldom more than 200 applicants now. Prof Eraiah said, "There are too many engineering colleges. Getting admission to these colleges is not that hard. People opt for engineering seats as they believe that those courses will lead to jobs that pay better salaries. At least in the initial stages of one's career after a degree in the basic sciences, one works for lesser salaries."

Bio-technology too is another popular option. That department receives almost 600 applicants for the 30 seats on offer. These colleges are visited by firms that offer students jobs through campus recruitment drives. Prof N Ramachandraswamy of the Chemistry department said that there are about 400 applications for the MSc course in Chemistry; the MSc in Bio-



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CNR RAO, SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR TO PM

chemistry attracts more than 900 applications. "This trend has emerged over the past three years," he told *The Express*.