

# Classes that you should be paying attention in: BBA edition

*Business administration is an applied discipline. It has a wide array of subjects, ranging from core business courses to liberal arts, or even science courses. If you're a BBA student, it's natural for you to wonder why you have to study so many different things, which are seemingly unrelated to your future profession.*



BBA graduates end up as Jack of all trades, and master of some. To ensure that they are capable of managing any conundrum thrown at them, gaining a bare-minimum knowledge in a multitude of subjects may be a well-devised way of ensuring that. This article compiles the core and relevant business courses that you should segregate to put extra emphasis on, because mastery in these will make a difference for you after graduation.

**Tier #1:** The subjects in this set are the central areas of focus in any BBA program. They are directly related to core-commerce and imparts to you the validation that you know the ABCDs of business studies.

1. Accounting: Accounting is to finance what math is to physics. Without having a good grasp of this subject, you won't be able to understand business and finance at all.

2. Marketing: While it's a bit difficult to learn this in the classroom, if you have a competent teacher, you'll pick up invaluable tips and tricks on the art of marketing. Don't disregard this course thinking it's too easy, because it really tests your creativity.

3. Finance: There is a ton of calculations and formulas that you need to master, but it's absolutely essential to take these classes seriously if you want a career in finance. Unlike marketing, just street knowledge won't take you far in this field.

4. Operations/Supply chain: Whatever organisation you end up working for, its

core operations are at the heart of everything. There's heavy competition with engineers when it comes to getting jobs in this field, so you must be an expert on this if you want to stand a chance against them. You can even become a Certified Supply Chain Analyst (CSCA) by completing a separate course offered by ISCEA during your undergrad.

5. Human Resource Management: HRM isn't something that can be learned perfectly in a classroom due to its highly subjective, vague nature. But if you think you have an inherent talent in managing people and want to work as an HR executive, you'll need to have these courses in your transcript.

6. Entrepreneurship: This course should teach you the exact steps on how you can establish the start-up of your dreams. From trade licensing to initial operations, you will learn the basics of building a business up from scratch.

7. Economics: Understanding the economy helps you figure out the bigger picture. All individuals and firms operate within an economy, so you'll find that micro and macroeconomics not only help you in your job, but also in your everyday life.

8. Statistics: You'll find out how necessary statistics is even before you graduate. There are surveys you have to conduct for every other course, and all of it requires you to know regression, distribution, probability etc. You'll have to keep doing this

for the rest of your career, especially if you work in research. SPSS is a magical software that you can learn to use through this course.

9. Research Methodology: This course is based on statistics, and it will take you through the specific steps of conducting procedural research, and making reports that are perfect in terms of content and format.

10. Business Communication: Effective communication and mutual understanding in business are two most basic aspects of developing a strong organisational culture and falls under its scope.

**Tier #2:** These courses should have a dynamic curriculum to keep up with the ever-changing world. If taught right, these are as crucial as the core BBA courses.

1. Management Information Systems: MIS is purely technological. It teaches you how to use data to make your business more efficient. It's perhaps one of the most useful courses you can take in this day and age.

2. Computer Applications: This world runs on tech. You might have to manage a tech company, and you need to know the basics of programming to know what exactly the employees of your company are doing.

3. Business Law: Firms exist in a legal system, and it's important that their employees don't end up breaking the law. Also, you can have a career in business law

by getting a relevant post-grad degree, so having this course in your undergrad will prove to be useful.

4. Ethics and Leadership: This course won't work out unless you have a teacher who knows how to inspire students. If you have such a teacher, this course might just help you become a better person.

5. Quantitative Analysis: Big Data is key for businesses, and this course teaches how to use that data to your advantage. It will also teach you the basics of Excel, a software that saves jobs and lives.

6. English: It's the international language, so that pretty much explains why you need to speak, read and write English perfectly.

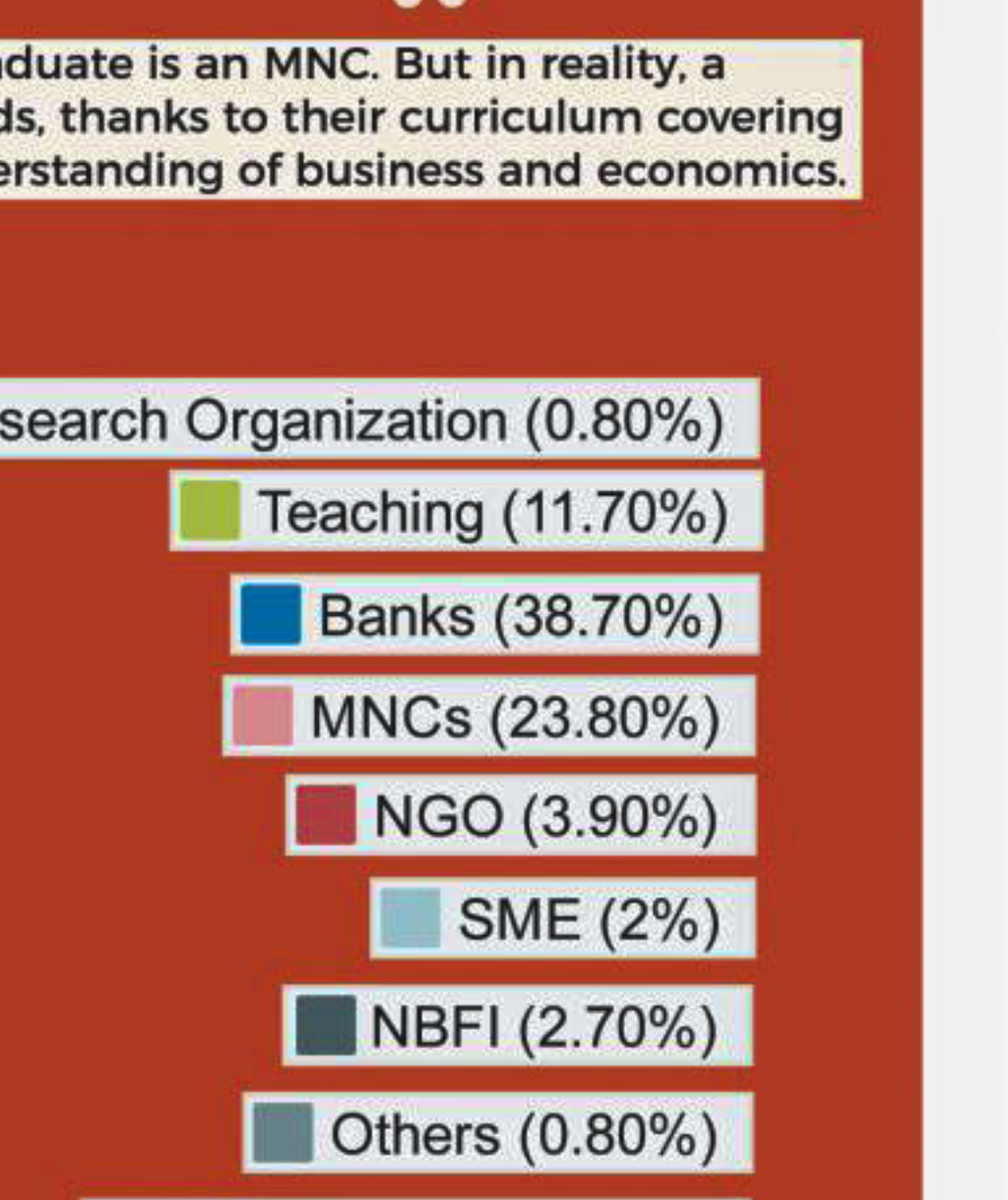
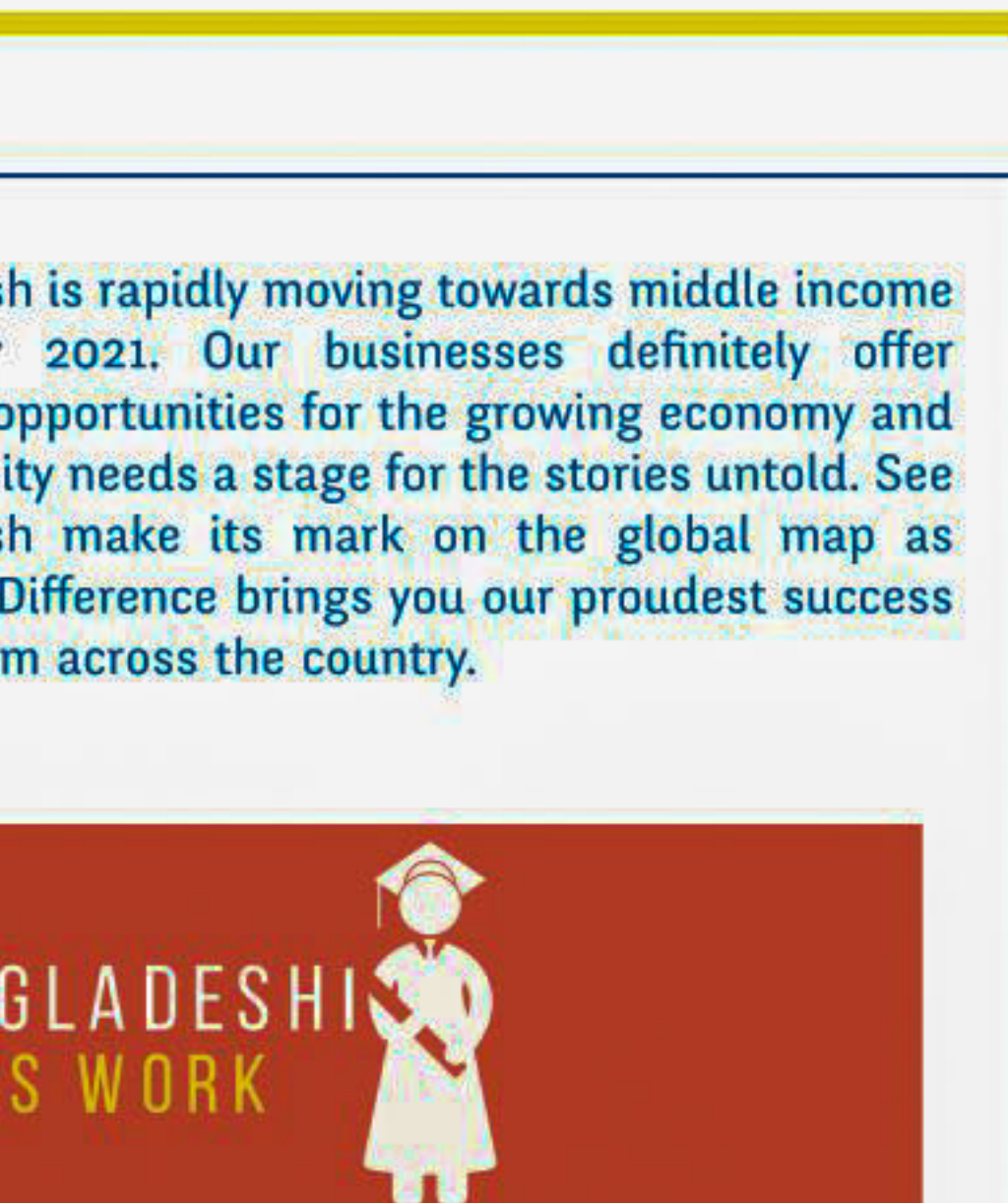
Apart from the ones mentioned here, there are a bunch of other courses like geography, biology, history, philosophy, environmental science, and many more that you can take in order to expand your knowledge base. Often times, these courses just seem like a hindrance when there are other courses like statistics or marketing that push you to your limits. But you should think of your liberal arts or science courses as an excellent opportunity to learn. Besides, it's easier to get As in these courses. So pay attention in class and switch off your cellphones, kids.

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## THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



## BREAKING THE BARRIER: MAYA APA

*Ever been in such dire situations where the universe seems to have conspired so badly against you that none of your emergency contacts are anywhere within reach? Maya Apa is here to lend help during just these moments, with their online messaging platform providing real-time expert consultations.*

With support from BRAC, the app was launched back in summer 2015 to build a first-of-its-kind service that makes access to high quality expert advice super easy. Doctors, psychologists, lawyers or counselors can often be out of reach due to lack of awareness, distance, finances and other socio-cultural barriers. Maya Apa provides its users, particularly women, an intuitive, secure messaging service where they can engage in one-on-one conversation with vetted experts and their online community without fear of judgment.

Maya's CEO, Ivy Huq Russel, named the company after her mother who successfully fought breast cancer. They have now built a network of over 100 on-demand experts. To date, they have delivered over half-a-million consultations. "Our site was initially very bare bones, and I added a basic comments box on the homepage with the call to action, "Ask Maya Apa anything." I routed the questions to my friends with relevant expertise. There are many issues women face in Bangladesh alone (domestic violence, mental health etc.), and I believed Maya could help solve these issues. Delivering this kind of

service turned out to be the killer feature," says Ivy.

At Maya Apa, experts are recruited through rigorous testing: online interviews, exams and face-to-face on-boarding sessions. This process tests not only the knowledge-base of experts but also their ability to respectfully give non-judgmental and impartial advice. Special in-house trainings are held to emphasise Maya's unbreakable values. In terms of interaction, Maya is an anonymous platform where interaction happens in a stigma-free environment, in three key steps:

(1) Users ask questions through app, website or SMS and these questions are routed to their vetted expert network.

(2) The system detects nature of the question and matches it with relevant experts. They call their experts' panel "Florence," where the relevant expert logs into and starts answering queries. Each user's personally identifiable information (PII) is kept secure through encryption. Experts are only able to view the user's question history, to give them well-rounded and customised responses.

(3) The user finally rates the expert's response which is then used

for quality assurance, rigorous data analytics and coaching methods to continually improve service

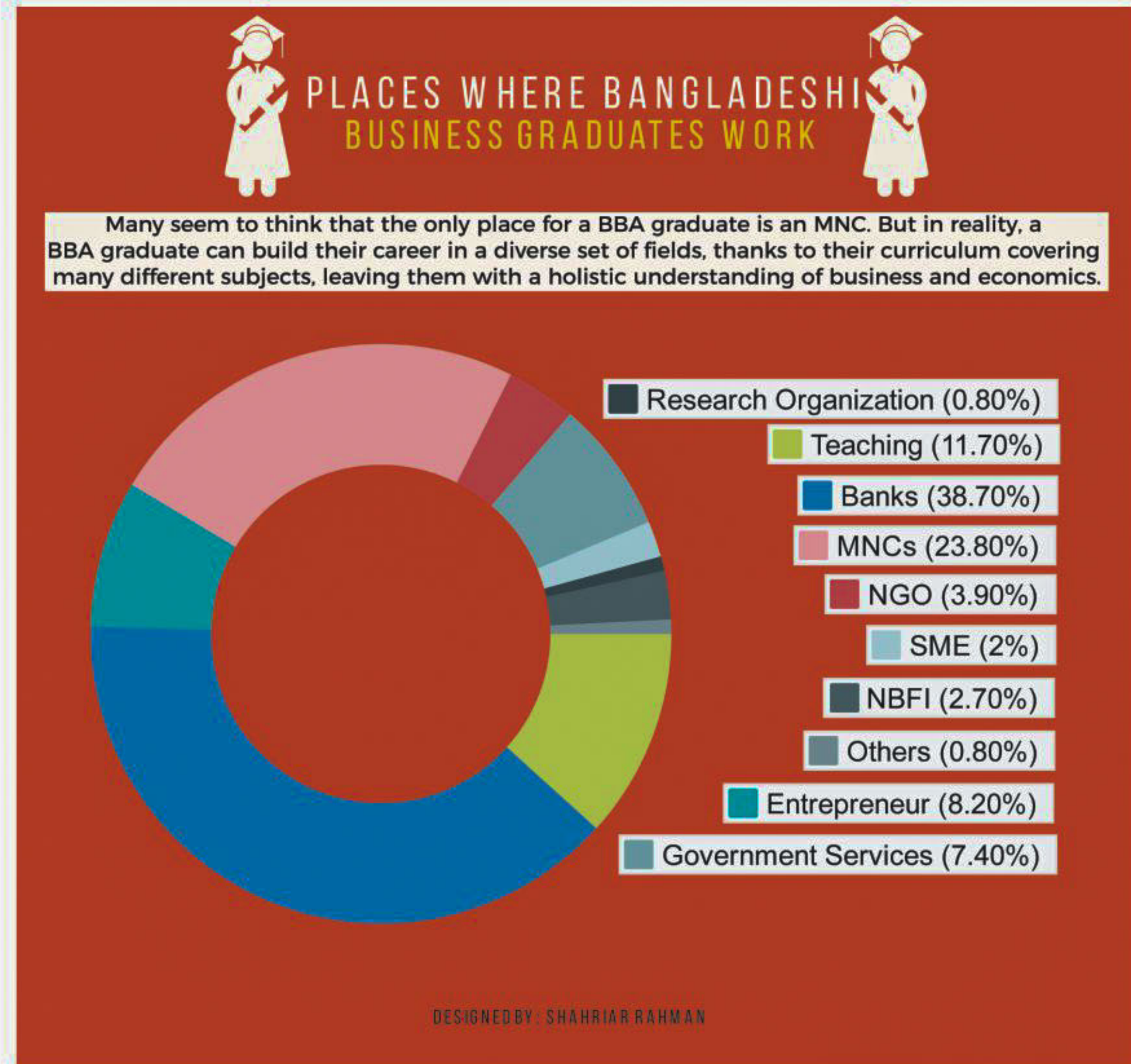
"We are working on Machine learning & AI and Natural Language Processing to create a system of health and mental experts, users, and technology backed-up by highly skilled engineers. My team and I personally spend a lot of time in the field where we get awesome feedback from users. Negative feedbacks are immediately dealt with by reaching out personally. We've held workshops at universities, garments factories, and NGOs. Our experts are often guest speakers on local radio shows. Challenge was to build this framework diligently and ensure reliability among users, but with a lot of help from ICT division, BRAC, other investors, and our excellent team - we now stand on a goldmine of data and knowledge that can help us keep improving the value we offer," says Ivy. Maya Apa is the first ever Bangladeshi start-up to be selected for the Google Launchpad Accelerator.

HALIMA SADIA

Halima is a final-year student at IBA, DU.

## Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.



SOURCE: ASIAN BUSINESS REVIEW