
7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness

Response:

Human Resource Management: An institution's performance is defined and characterized by its reason for coming into existence, its vision, the nature of the stakeholders, and access to various resources, cultural ambience, physical location etc. But as an educational institution, students are the primary human resource of our College and we claim that the distinctiveness of this institution lies in the way these human resources are managed.

The college is located in the Northern part of Wayanad, which is a backward, remote and rural district. The district has no railway line or airport. It is the district in Kerala which has the least population and the highest number of Scheduled Tribes. Most of the people here depend on farming for their livelihood and find it difficult to make both ends meet. Their children had no facility for higher education. It is this context that inspired the Management to establish Mary Matha Arts and Science College, with the mission to provide quality education to the youth of Wayanad.

Unlike most other higher educational institutions, our task is to bring solutions to the socio-economic backwardness of the district by educating the children. The steps through which solutions to these problems are brought by the college define the Human Resource Management of the institution.

Most of the students of the college come from economically backward families. Many students who are admitted to the College hail from educationally backward families and are first-generation learners. The academic and socio-cultural challenges faced by these students are immense. Facilities like personal computers, internet access, labs, journals, and reference books are inaccessible to most of the students. They do not get opportunities to meet eminent scholars and personalities in their areas of interest to get motivated. There are students who find even normal classroom interactions very difficult in the initial phases of their entry to the Programme, as English is the medium of instruction. Participation in classroom activities and other extracurricular activities due to poor communication skills and interpersonal skills are major challenges they face. They come to the college without a hint of what to expect in their academic life and career.

Convinced of these ground realities, the College, through the following processes make a convincingly successful human resource management resulting in the progression of the student, uplift of the family and the betterment of the community.

Soon after the admission of the students to different courses, the teachers understand the learning levels of different students through entry level tests, quizzes, and other activities. Students are divided into advanced, average and slow learners, based on their learning abilities, and different methods of teaching are adapted to cater to the needs of the students. Bridge Courses introduced at the beginning of the first semester help many students to get in tune with the degree level teaching/ learning system. It acts as a

bridge between the higher secondary and degree course. In addition to the General English classes prescribed by the University, the College also offers a Certificate Course in Communicative English. Teachers insist on the students reading more books and journals in English. Each class is provided with a sufficient number of English newspapers. The language acquisition process of the students is further supplemented with daily news reading sessions, discussions and debates. The Institution also has a good library with an excellent collection of books, journals and other articles.

Most of our classrooms are equipped with projectors and smart boards which make ICT enabled teaching possible. The students are provided access to computers with internet facilities free of cost. Computer literacy among the students is made certain by the faculty members by sending group emails, collecting assignments online etc.

The mentoring and counselling system of the college enables each student to get adequate care and attention. They are also provided with ample opportunities to interact with teachers from other institutions, scholars and scientists, which motivate them. Industrial Visits, motivational tours, seminars, and workshops are regularly organized by all departments. Students are encouraged to do internships and projects in their subjects. Soft-skills training given to the students help them develop interpersonal skills. The organizational skills of the students are also developed by involving them in all activities of the College including extension activities under the guidance of experienced teachers. The College also ensures that all students benefit the most from all government initiatives like WWS, SSP, ASAP, etc. which help them to be a part of a positively influential peer group. Since many students are from economically backward families, the College provides financial assistance to the deserving students through the scholarship section. Government scholarships are notified to all the students on time. Additionally, the institution provides scholarships to meritorious and deserving candidates. With proper training during the course of their graduation, students are made well equipped to face different challenges of the world like facing large audiences, interviews, group discussions, etc.

The guidance and motivation given to our students for higher education, and the close monitoring of their progression enabled many of our students climb greater heights. A closer analysis of our alumni who hold reputed position in society and their backgrounds (before and after college) would supplement the effective Human Resource Management of the college with sufficient evidence. The Institution has witnessed the metamorphosis of low profile students into talented academicians, technocrats, and journalists. The distinguished alumni of the College like Vinod K Jose, Executive Editor, The Caravan, Dr. Sarath Sasi, Assistant Professor, IIT Palakkad are a few examples.

Another evidence of the College's effective human resource management is the increasing number of our alumni who are getting appointed as faculty members in our college and in the neighbouring institutions. During the initial years of the college, all our faculty members were recruited from outside the districts as there was a dearth of qualified hands but in recent years, the permanent and guest faculty who are recruited are from Wayanad district itself, most of them our own students.