

## **Institutional Distinctiveness**

**Title : Access to quality higher education to the rural society leading to regional development.**

Vision statement of the Institute sketches its own distinctiveness on a larger map. As per the Vision statement, the institution prepares internationally acceptable and employable professionals. In addition, the institute aims at preparing professionals with emotional balance, psychological strength and social responsibility and to make them good citizens and good human beings.

### **Context:**

Many studies and surveys in the country revealed most of the professionals are knowledgeable but their attitudes are not fully rational due to emotional imbalance. Some of the students of high caliber (who face competitive exams like JEE) are not able to cope up with the pressures of life and going in to depression. The ethical and human values at the individual and at the organization level degenerated to a level of creating disorderly society. VFSTR recognized these factors very early and formulated its Vision statement giving stress on development of psychological strength along with high quality academics.

### **The Practice:**

60% of the students who join VFSTR hail from agricultural families – mainly from socially and economically backward classes. The institute is concentrating on three important aspects – quality academics, psychological balance, and social responsibility. These three aims are essential because large number of students who join the institute are those who aspire for higher education from the rural families, most of them being first graduate-attempts from their families. Their background causes low levels of communication skills, and lack of confidence, and low awareness on social problems.

The institute implements its Vision through the following steps:

#### **Step 1: Scholarships and Road map for the students**

Nearly Rs.17 crores is given annually as scholarship to about 30 – 40% of the students. Some of the students are supported with subsidy in hostel fee also.

Special efforts are put in the bridge course itself to instill confidence by giving the large number of examples of people who rose from rags to riches. They are given a very clear road map for the next four years.

#### **Step 2: Development of Communication and confidence**

Improving communication skills and increasing the confidence levels is essential for the start of their growth in the Institute. Hence a 100 hour special course on English is conducted, so that they will be more confident and communicative.

The course is an outcome of an MoU with Cambridge University which gives certificates to the qualified students in their English language exams. This step is a great leap forward for them.

### **Step 3: Foundations for strong academics**

As the students who join come with varied levels of academic strengths, the Institute has to carefully plan the details of quality education. Rigorous process is followed to recruit faculty, and serious training is given to make them effectively handle the students. Adopting quality content and teaching methodologies, along with strong academic scrutiny systems enables the students to be knowledgeable on par with any premier institutes.

### **Step 4: Development of Attitudes such as team spirit, inter personnel relations.**

The counselling and mentoring system of the institution helps the students to overcome their economic issues, family issues and inferiority complex etc., and enable them to compete with others. One faculty is allotted roughly 20 students to concentrate and counsel. These counsellors study the students progress in academics, and their social and family issues which could be distracting from their studies. They plan, advise, and implement corrective measures to improve the students on all the fronts.

Some of the bright students are allotted as mentors to the weak students.

### **Step5: Psychological, Emotional Strength through Co- Curricular and Extracurricular activities**

Exclusive sports, art, literary and cultural activities like Public Speaking, Theatre club or Foreign Language classes, dance and music classes are organized on Saturdays for the holistic development of students.

An exclusive Student Activity Committee (SAC) is in place to coordinate cultural and literary activities. Participation of the students in the SAC activities helps them to acquire leadership qualities.

### **Step 6 :Development of social consciousness**

The Institute conducts many cultural events throughout the year.

The institution conducts national festivals like Independence Day, Republic day, Engineer's day, Teacher's day, Gandhi Jayanthi etc. in a very meaningful way by giving all the inputs required.

Institution conducts parent felicitation every year to inculcate the culture as well as to create pride among them.

From admission to Convocation the culture of the institute is to treat any parent or student equally irrespective of their background with all dignity at all levels.

The students are given assignments and projects to identify the social problems in three – four layers

- Understanding of their family situation and appreciating the work of their parents
- Understanding problems in neighborhood.
- Understanding the regional and national problems and the trends in technology and social perceptions
- Attending real social problems through extension activities especially on Education, Health, Technical Skills, and other facilities like sanitation, cleanliness etc.

### **Step 7 :Success of the Effort**

More than 90% of the students are getting placement in the campus itself and some of them are recruited for higher level jobs also.

The conduct of events on the campus and entrepreneurship activities also helped them to attain good levels in their professions later.

It is noteworthy to mention that some of the students, who are very low level in their communication and confidence at the time of admissions, became very successful anchor, orators, leaders etc., in their life, due to the training in the institute.

With all above efforts the institution is happy that it is able to create access to quality education to the rural students of economically backward communities. Incidentally, this is the main concern of the Government of India, and one of the core values of NAAC, and the prime value of the statutory bodies like UGC, AICTE.

VFSTR justifiably takes pride that it has awarded Engineering and Management degrees to more than 10,000 students since its inception, thus leading to the improvement of quality of life of that many families in this region.