GROWING BEYOND ITS LIMITATIONS

Space constraints notwithstanding, MOP Vaishnav College has been pioneering education with many firsts such as a community radio and a student Cabinet. Their students have excelled in sports too.

STAND OUT

SURAHKSHA P | CHENNAI

With just a year left for its Silver Jubilee celebration, MOP Vaishnav College is perhaps the youngest self-financed women’s college in the city. MOP initiated a series of firsts in the city by becoming the first college to have a community radio station and the first to replace a student union with a student cabinet and co-ministries.

“Ehing College has been around for more than 60 years. Queen Mary’s College is over a 100. By that measure we are relatively young, but second to none. Our 5,000 plus students excel in every field,” says Lalitha Balakrishnan, Principal, MOP Vaishnav College. The college has around 3,500 students and 170 teachers along with many guest faculty members.

Courses

The Institute today offers 14 undergraduate courses, six PG courses and a doctoral programme. The college’s School of Communication and Media Studies offers BSE in Visual Communication, Electronic Media; BA Journalism; MA in Communication; Media Management; and Broadcast Communication.

While the School of Information Technology offers BSE in Computer Science, Mathematics, and BCA, the School of Business offers BBA, BCom in Information Systems Management, Accounting and Finance, Marketing Management, Corporate Secretariatship, Honours in Criminology and Justice, and the School of Food Science offers BSc in Food Science and Management and MSc in Food Technology and Management.

Accredited ‘A’ by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council in 2009, the college has been autonomous since 2004.

Community Radio

Broadcast on FM 107.8 Hz, MOP became the first college to receive a licence from the Government of India for the radio station. Students are currently on air for 12 hours that will soon be extended up to 16 hours. “The programme focuses on education, health and community-related issues. Former Collector of Coimbatore, Supriya Sahu, was floored by the idea. We have news bulletins, panel discussions, interviews, guest lectures and much more,” says Balakrishnan.

“Our content is not only of interest to students but also to children and adults of all ages. It ranges from astrology to sociology. For example, in the event of competitions in the CS department, a student from the department presents a programme on app development. Similarly, students from Food Science talk about maintaining a healthy diet, Commerce students talk about mergers and acquisitions, so on and so forth,” she explains.

Student Cabinet

Asked how a Cabinet was different from a Union, the Principal offers, “The word Union has a negative connotation. It implies rebellion and conflict. So we have a Student Cabinet instead, Members of Parliament and 10 ministries, we have one for Social Welfare, Home, Cultural Affairs, etc. It is a step in improving the decision making skills of the students and offers lessons in actual functioning of ministries at the national level, she believes.

Sweeta Kannan who recently graduated in BCom Marketing was the Home Minister of the student Cabinet. “MOP is great in terms of subject areas and project opportunities that it offers. We are even allowed to choose professors from other colleges for project guidance. I was placed during my internship itself, so I didn’t need to sit for placements,” says Sweeta.

MOM Club

Mothers of MOP (MOM) club is the name suggests is for mothers of students to equip them with skill sets required to help their daughters in their relationships. “There are days when we have activities for fun and frolic but we also have professional counsellors to help the students if they are having relationship issues. A lot of them may not know how to behave with the opposite sex, after coming straight out of school,” says Balakrishnan. The club provides an opportunity for the mothers to network and socialise with other parents.

Space Constraints

The college’s vision is to become a reputed international university. A major impediment in this process is dearth of space. MOP does not have playgrounds but its students have won laurels in sports, debating, athletics, basketball or cricket. “Every time there is a commission here they tend to compare physical infrastructure with potential and capacity. That alone does not translate to excellence,” Balakrishnan says.

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School, Goldsmith Sachs and Wipro. “Around 28 campuses visited our company this year. Only 30 per cent of the students register for placements, the rest opt for higher studies or take over their family businesses or get married. This has been a trend at MOP with respect to undergraduate students,” says Sundari Kangarajan, Head of the Placement Cell.

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