

7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness

Provide the details of the performance of the institution in one area distinctive to its vision, priority and thrust. Provide the weblink of the institution in not more than 500 words

‘Character-building Education’

2. Goal

Being a part of the Ramakrishna Mission, the Institution is instrumental in giving shape to Swami Vivekananda’s ideas regarding education. Swami Vivekananda says *‘What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.’* So according to Vivekananda, a man whose will does not drag him hither and thither but rather he himself possessing full control over his will employs it along positive and beneficial channels is a truly educated man. Such an education which rests on self-control and correct self-exertion is what Vivekananda called ‘Man-making, Character-building Education’.

Inspired by such a lofty ideal of education the Institution attempts to inculcate a combination of practical skills to fulfill the basic needs, moral values for a superior inter-personal relationship, spiritual wisdom for a fearless existence.

3. The Context

After the Independence of India, a gradual decline in the moral integrity of the society as a whole, a slow poisoning of the youth psyche by the glitter egocentric pleasures, a clouded wisdom of the elders unable to show the path of strength and peace is undoubtedly evident to any careful observer. Time is ripe enough to save the youth, the future citizens from a disastrous tragedy. So the Institution along with its leader, Swami Vivekananda, possesses genuine feeling for the youth and wants to empower them with a strength that is imperishable, with a hope that is unflinching and with a freedom that is unselfish. Swami Vivekananda says, *‘money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamant walls of difficulties.’*

Hence, the Institution is trying to guide the youth along the lines of character- building so that tomorrow’s sunrise becomes more golden.

4. The Practice

Practices:

- First of all the very ambience of the Institution instills orderliness and calmness in one and all. As one enters the college the gigantic portraits of Swami Vivekananda as if calls upon the ‘sleeping soul’ towards a glorious way of life based on self-confidence and self-sacrifice. The main campus welcomes the visitors into the holy precincts of a Universal Temple dedicated to Shri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of Religious harmony. Thus just an unplanned entry into the campus is gifted with an elevating experience. The students having got an opportunity to study in such an environment imbibe the spirit of holiness and serenity within them.

- A number of programmes are arranged to expose the students to the ideals of Indian Culture and Spirituality with a background of Universalism as propounded by the great lives and teachings of Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Shri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Some of the important measures taken in this direction to fortify the character of the youth are given below:

- a) Seminars on Swami Vivekananda’s ideas are arranged in the college. Eminent speakers from all walks of life starting from Professors coming from Science, Arts and

Engineering fields, Vice-Chancellors, Monks of the Ramakrishna Mission and many other dignitaries enlighten the students towards right understanding and implementation of Swamiji's bold and strong ideas. They shed light on different aspects of the great one's life and message like Vivekananda's concepts on Education, Science and Technology, Service, Nation-building, Youth, Human Development and so on. Thus, inspirations run along varying channels and mould the student community according to one's unique tendencies but always in a positive direction.

b) Books on value education and personality development are often distributed among the students free of cost.

c) Swami Vivekananda has emphasized on service to country men as the chief means for character building. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ideal of Service is *Service to man as service to God*. Swami Vivekananda calls upon the youth '*What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. love? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life; all selfishness is death, and this is true here or hereafter. It is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are ghosts — for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden;..*'. The young students are given a taste of the bliss involved in selfless service and its efficacy in elevating oneself. During the Annual Voluntary Blood Donation Camp, the Annual Eye Operation Camp etc. the students are given a chance to serve the 'Living-God' as manifested in the form of the suffering patient hailing from dire circumstances.

d) The students are often assigned responsibilities for conducting different cultural programmes, preparing wall magazines or poster presentations or exhibitions etc. This arouses the self-confidence of the students and moulds them as leaders for future.

e) Discourses on various spiritual topics are arranged in the Universal Temple of the main campus. The birthdays of luminaries of different religions are celebrated with equal sanctity and devotion. These include the birthday celebrations of Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, Shri Krishna, Adi Shankaracharya, Shri Ramakrishna, Shri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and many others. The students have full access to these discussions and to learn about the ennobling features in the lives and teaching of these great ones. On the other side since the Organisation emphasizes the harmony of all religions, Universal brotherhood and reverence towards Teachers of every Religion, hence the spirit of a spiritual Oneness amidst diverse courses of each religion is inculcated among the youth for a much more all-inclusive feeling to develop. This feature is very much pertinent when separatist ideas still create strife among men.

f) Every evening there is congregational prayer and vesper service in the Temple. Interested students participate in it.

g) One of the rare opportunities which the students enjoy is the close contact with the monastic members who try to help them build a strong foundation for their character-building. Often the students come up with several psycho-social complications and seek solutions from the monastic members of the College. The monks too keep a caring vigilance over the students and guide them in path of righteousness. Some of the students have received spiritual instructions from the President or Vice-Presidents of the Ramakrishna Mission and engage themselves in regular meditation.

h) The college library has books on Value Education, Personality Development and Swami Vivekananda; monthly journals on spiritual culture brought out by the Ramakrishna Mission like *Prabuddha Bharata*, *Vedanta-Kesari* etc.; e-books, CDs and DVDs on Personality Development, Education, Spiritual development etc. for giving the students easy access to the rich heritage and the legacy which they bear.

i) All the cultural programmes held in the college have a goal to invigorate the urge for becoming better, enlightened human beings.

Festivals like Saraswati Puja, Durga Puja, etc. held in the college and the main campus introduce the students to the rich and deep spiritual heritage of India. The students participate in a colourful procession organized to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Shri Ramakrishna in which folk artists of rural Bengal take part. This is a novel experience to know the legacy which we bear.

The following are the activities were being conducted last one year (2018-19):

Activity	Duration (from-----to-----)
Skill Enhancement course on Value Education and Indian Culture	July-December 2018
Service Projects for students where students serve people irrespective of any distinctions of caste, creed or religion.	i) Blood Donation Camp: 29 th September, 2018 ii) Free Eye Operation Camp: 22-24 December, 2018 iii) NSS camp for Rural Development: 22-28 December, 2018 iv) Service Project on teaching, cleaning and helping the needy
Art Competition of Swami Vivekananda's Universal Ideas and Inspirations	12 January, 2019
Seminars and workshops on Universal Values and Ethics	A National Seminar On "Chicago Address of Swami Vivekananda and its impact in Indian Society and Nationalism" (to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Chicago Address) Sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi 12-13 January, 2019
	Sparsha 2019 – a workshop on Ethics & Interdisciplinary Education towards Quality of Human Life organized in collaboration with The Zoological Society , Kolkata
	An International Seminar on "Influence of Swami Vivekananda and Gautam Buddha in Culture and Civilization of Southeast Asia" Organized by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS) in collaboration with Ramakrishna Mission

	<p>Vivekananda Centenary College, Rahara 15-16 March, 2019</p>
<p>Publication of books with ISBN to promote Universal Values and Ethics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Jivan Sopan</p> <p>First Published: 2014</p> <p>Revised Edition: 2018-19</p> <p>This is a textbook for Value Education and Indian Culture published by the College which provides a detailed guideline on ethics, personality development and holistic growth. This is prescribed for the students for their Skill Enhancement Course.</p> <p>• Swami Vivekananda and Youth</p> <p>Published in : 2015</p> <p>Book for man-making and character-building ideas of Swami Vivekananda for the youth.</p> <p>• Swami Vivekananda and his Universal Ideas</p> <p>Published in 2016</p> <p>This book has dealt with this issue of universality as envisioned by Swami Vivekananda looked from different corners, be it in harmonizing work and worship, be it in inter-religious exchange and admiration, be it in striking a balance amidst the opposing features of the human personality, or be it in ecological balance.</p> <p>• Sister Nivedita and her Contributions to India</p> <p>First Published in 2018</p> <p>Eminent statesmen, poets, artists, scientists, historians and journalists and who came close to Sister Nivedita were inspired and influenced by her. The book attempts to promote, analyse and understand her</p>

contribution to India in different domains.