

INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS

Elevating the Disadvantaged through Equity Initiatives

Introduction

The New College is run by a not-for profit society (The Muslim Educational Association of Southern India) which has been engaging in social and educational activities from 1901. The College has been nurturing a sustained commitment to uplift the socially and economically disadvantaged students right from the time of its establishment in 1951. The main inspiration behind the equity initiatives of the institution is the realisation that even after 75 years of independence, Indian Muslims remain an educationally backward community. According to the latest available AISHE report, the total enrolment ratio of Muslims to higher educational institutions is 5.5% and the enrolment of other minority communities is 2.3%. Whereas, students from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute 14.7% and 5.6% of the total enrolment, respectively.

<https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=277>

The vision and mission of the college clearly states the commitment to empower the weaker sections. The college envisions

“To promote educational and economic equity by helping aspiring and underprivileged youth gain access to quality education and to nurture them into successful model citizens of the country.”

The vision is actualised through the Mission

“To follow a 5E holistic development approach that strives to

- *ELEVATE* underprivileged students with affordable education
- *EDUCATE* through a qualitative platform and updated pedagogy
- *EMPOWER* the students by instilling right values, skills and confidence

- *ENGAGE students in real life situations and transform them into responsible leaders of tomorrow*
- *EXCEL in all aspects of governance, education and development.*

The 5E mission was mainly carried out by the college through various centres and cells that took care of every service offered to students, from admission to placement. While the college aims at a holistic development and transformation of the students admitted, it considers the mission to elevate them as the primary step towards achieving social, educational and economic equity.

Being a minority institution, the college is permitted to offer 50% of its seats to students belonging to Muslim minority community, and reservation rules are followed for the remaining seats. During the past seven decades, the college has empowered thousands of students from the disadvantaged sections, including first generation graduates. The efforts to elevate and empower students from disadvantaged sections is evident in the lives of the passed-out students and their families. The list of the illustrious alumni displayed in the college website is also indicative of the diversity of the graduates produced by the college all through its history.

The steps taken by the institution to elevate the weaker sections among its students include

- Free education in select programmes.
- Scholarship by the parent body, Muslim Educational Association of Southern India (MEASI).
- Scholarship by Alumni association of the college.
- Admission to first generation learners.
- Career guidance & counselling.
- Placement services.
- Free Mid-Day Meals.

Admission

The admission policy of the college clearly defines the thrust of the college on empowering the students from the minority community for whom the college was established. As per the provisions allowed for minority institutions, 50% of the total UG and PG seats in the college are reserved for the members of the Muslim community. The college follows the regulations of the Government of Tamil Nadu in admitting students for the remaining seats. As the reservations rules of the government necessitates offering admission to students from different reservation categories, in effect, the majority of the students who get admitted to the college belong to the socially disadvantaged sections. During the last five years, 18,413 scholarships and freeship were awarded by different agencies including the state government, college management to students from the financially disadvantaged categories. As the college has also been known for admitting first generation learners, despite its urban location, a lot of first generation learners from within and outside the state, including students from rural areas seek admission in the college. For instance, as per the admission ERP data, the college admitted 560 out of 2084 first-generation learners during the academic year 2020-21.

Scholarships

As part of its vision to contribute towards educational and economic equity, the **Muslim Educational Association of Southern India (MEASI)**, the parent body of The New College, sets aside an average of more than Rupees One Crore every year for scholarships to the socially backward students of the college. The main sources of the parent body's income include donations received from alumni and philanthropists. The management of the college **disbursed a sum of Rs. 5,23,46,005/-** (Rupees five crores, twenty-three lakhs, forty-six thousand and five only) towards scholarships to **4058 financially deprived students** from the college during the last five years. The New College Alumni Association (NCAA) also provides scholarships worth **Rs. 1,07,820/-** (Rupees one lakh seven thousand eight hundred and twenty) to

six meritorious students from backward sections pursuing UG and PG programmes in the college during 2020-21 academic year. In addition, the efforts taken by the institution resulted in **346** students securing scholarships from different other sources, excluding government scholarships.

Free Education Schemes

The college provides free education under four different categories. Firstly, with the objective of promoting the languages, the college does not collect tuition fee and special fee for UG and PG programmes in Arabic, Tamil and Urdu languages. During the last five years, **398 students were benefited** by the free education scheme offered to the students pursuing UG and PG programmes in Arabic, Tamil and Urdu. Secondly, children of the self-supporting teaching and non-teaching staff working in the college are eligible for free education. Thirdly, the college provides free education to exceptionally brilliant students who have a proven record of merit, and students from extremely poor backgrounds. In addition, the University of Madras recommends a few students for free education every year, and it is mandatory for the college to offer free education to such students. For instance, the entire UG, PG educational expenses of a student who excelled in space science was borne by the management. The student completed B.Sc. Physics in 2017-20 batch, and M.Sc. Physics in 2020-22 batch in the college. In addition, the college offered free education to students from financially weaker sections, based on the recommendations from the heads of the local community institutions, in a special drive conducted in 2021. On the whole, free education and special scholarships worth Rs. **7,71,710/-** (Rupees seven lakhs seventy-one thousand seven hundred and ten only) were provided by the institution during the five years.

Mid-Day Meals Schemes and Free Breakfast Scheme

In the academic year 2018-19, the management of the college introduced a mid-day meals scheme (MEASI Meals Scheme) for poor students, particularly those coming to the college from faraway places. The scheme has been a phenomenal

success as an average of 120 students were benefited by the scheme every day. On the whole, during the last three academic years (from 2019 to 2021), 404 students were benefited by the scheme. Besides, the college has started providing breakfast to Shift I students coming to college from faraway places from the year 2021. Under this scheme, on an average 50 students are provided free breakfast every day.

Career Guidance and Placement

The career guidance and placement cell of the college organises a series of career guidance programmes and placement drives for the benefit of the outgoing students of every batch. The college does not collect any fees for placement training and placement drives. These drives are also aimed at providing job opportunities for the socially disadvantaged students. More than three thousand students are benefited by the activities of the cell during the last five years, including students who progressed to higher studies and students who got placement.

Other Schemes

Other equity initiatives of the college include the One Rupee Scheme and Departmental Students Scholarship Funds in select departments aimed at collecting funds for helping financially backward students to pay their examination fees and tuition fee.

Assistance for Divyangjan Students (the Visually Challenged)

All the visually challenged students of the college are exempted from paying their college fee and examination fee. They are also provided free lodging in the New College Hostel. Besides, the college pays remuneration for the services rendered by the Scribes to the visually challenged students during examinations.

Conclusion

Thus, among the various steps taken by The New College to implement its vision, the equity initiatives discussed above stand out distinctively. The free education

schemes of the college have enabled over eighteen thousand students from financially weaker sections to realise their dream of completing graduation and post-graduation. The gradual increase in the amount of scholarship disbursed by the management from 2016-17 to 2020-21 is a clear indication of the efforts taken by the institution to enhance the support rendered to the deserving students. While in 2016-17, the management spent Rs. 89,30,200/- (Rupees Eighty-nine lakhs, thirty thousand two hundred only) towards scholarships, the amount increased to 1,27,90,020/- (Rupees One Crore, Twenty-Seven Lakhs, ninety thousand and twenty only) in 2020-21. Thus, all these equity initiatives of the college are ways to implement the mission of elevating and empowering the students admitted in the college.