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A good study theatre

Ramesh Babu , Hindustan Times
Email Author
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Table with 3 columns: Current, Upcoming, Recent. Rows include CSK vs RCB, SRB vs WAR, ZIM vs IRE.

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Nestled in a corner of the historic city of Kozhikode (earlier known as Calicut), the 100-acre IIM-K campus looks like a sprawling resort. At a time when India's politicians are wrangling over women's reservation in legislatures, the country's fifth IIM was the first B-school to acknowledge women's power and reserve 30 per cent of its seats for them.

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How did this happen? When Union HRD minister Kapil Sibal visited the campus in March, he said there were few women in the country's top B-schools. That prompted the institute to take action. Today, IIM-K faculty members find that women students are more consistent, pragmatic and business-oriented than their male counterparts.

Starting in 1997 with 42 students in its post-graduate programme, IIM-K's numbers grew five-fold by 2010. The institute conducts a full range of academic activities in management education covering research, teaching, training, consulting and intellectual infrastructure development.

IIM-K director Debashis Chatterjee said that the institute inculcates the spirit of "dream, innovate and achieve" in students, who imbibe social concern as an integral part of learning. It conducts many local community-based programmes to ensure an inclusive growth trajectory.

Highlighting the other qualities of IIM-K, Chatterjee said, "This is the most efficiently-run IIM, with the lowest administration cost. Our CTC (Cost to Country) is a small fraction of the value we generate for the nation. We have touched a corpus of R100 crore this year by prudent management of expenditure in a short period of our existence.

"I don't want my classrooms to be an operation theatre. I want it to be a good theatre. We want it to be led by knowledge, not by demand," the director explained. "We want to globalise Indian thought. For this, we have to combine hi-tech with hi-touch," he said, adding that he preferred more real life heroes than lab-made entrepreneurs.

"If the livelihood is for life, what is life for, I often used to ask my students," Chatterjee said, explaining that the whole exercise is about purpose, not goal. The institute has an arrangement with about 40 international schools and 50 top CEOs visited the campus in the past two years.

IIM-K students are happy with the kind of social awareness they have developed at the institute. "Often we were asked by our teachers how we can make this planet a little more sustainable," said second-year student Rahul Bhaskar, who is also the media cell convenor.

"We get case studies, project work, role plays and video shows, ensuring a holistic perspective of business," he added. Tina Gupta, a first-year student agreed. "Learning is quite different here," she said.

Institute alumnus Gaurav Sharma, who now works with Accenture Consulting, said, "IIM-K with its lush green campus is the quintessential Gurukul where thinking minds collaborate and generate new ideas."

Companies on the lookout for professional talent are also happy with the kind of graduates they find at IIM-K. Said Ravi Ajmera of Deutsche Bank (Global Markets), "We get finished and fine-tuned products from here. We are really impressed by the maturity of the students and their professional demeanour."

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