

TheMES

A Communication from the President



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Dear MES-ites,

New Academic Year, New Beginnings

Academic year 2022-23 has gotten off to a brisk start. In our Schools and PU Colleges, classes have started. Soon, admissions to PU Colleges will be over. Admissions to the BA, BSc, BCom and BBA programs have just begun. This edition of *TheMes* is about a few new initiatives that, hopefully, will support academic achievements of the MES schools and colleges beginning from the current year.

MES College Alumni Association (MESCAA)

MES Degree College has had an alumni association since many years. But it was an informal and inactive body. Dr. Shashidhar, Chairman of the Governing Body of MES College, led the efforts that resulted in MESCAA being formed in June 2021 under the Karnataka Societies Registration Act, 1960. MESCAA, with some 250 members, was formally inaugurated on 5th June at a function where Sri Suresh Kumar, an alumnus (1971-74) and former Minister in the Government of Karnataka was the Chief Guest.



5th June being World Environment Day, Sri M K Krishna of the Civil Society Organisation Trust spoke about "Hasiru Mission" and Sri S Shivaprakash, IFS (Retd.) (Alumnus – 1970-73) spoke about air quality. Dr. S R Anantha Narayana, Secretary (Alumnus – 1970-73) reported that MESCAA has so far donated a drip irrigation system to the Botany department and given away books and financial aid to a few deserving students. The aims and objectives of MESCAA are listed in the Memorandum of Association (MOA). Among them Art. 3.4, "To help and assist the Management of MES in the growth and development of the college by way of contributions collected from the members of the Association" is perhaps the most important.

MESCAA has begun well. The financial contributions raised so far are small yet significant first steps. However, going forward, contributions in the realm of ideas and know-how will be far more important. As a Higher Educational Institution (HEI) under National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, MES College has to develop its own Institutional

Development Plan (IPD) soon and strive to become an autonomous institution within the next ten years. This will call for meticulous, participative planning. Caught up as they are in day-to-day academic and administrative work, teachers will find it difficult to go through the required exercises. Here, alumni with strong education, research and industry credentials can step in and provide valuable, practical leads. Handled well, mentoring of the faculty by the alumni can have huge payoffs for MES College in the coming years.



Besides, well begun may not always be half done. This is because formal organisations become process-rather than outcome-driven. Also, context matters. NEP 2020 will be implemented in more challenging environments with MES College competing for good students by offering attractively designed courses and combinations. The College can ill afford to sit on its laurels. The dreams of the future will be more important than the history of the past. Reverence of the past has to be combined with excitement about the future of the College, as a younger generation of qualified and trained teachers take charge. The challenge will be to seek out alumni in key positions who can become strategic partners, be it by offering internships to students, helping the College to redesign its labs and facilities, etc.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is a generic term that is used quite widely to denote sustained attempts to upgrade the skills of professionals in an organisation. In the context of education, a British Council document states that "CPD is a **planned, continuous and lifelong process** whereby **teachers try to develop their personal and professional qualities**, and to **improve their knowledge, skills and practice, leading to their empowerment, the improvement of their agency and the development of their organisation and their pupils.**"

Para 5.15 of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 states that "Each teacher will be expected to participate in,

say, **50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their own professional development, driven by their own needs and choice.** CPD opportunities will, in particular, systematically cover the latest pedagogies regarding foundational literacy and numeracy, formative and adaptive assessment of learning outcomes, individualised and competency-based learning and related pedagogies, such as experiential learning, arts-integrated, sports-integrated, and storytelling-based approaches, etc."

Faced with the reality that most teachers have not been given significant training opportunities in the course of their long careers at MES, I had been working on CPD since 2019. Discussions were held between the MES Management and Educafe Student Solutions (Pvt.) Ltd., (Educafe) since mid-2020. Educafe, set up in 2013 by an alumnus of MES, is a Training and Assessment Company in the educational space and has extensive experience in providing innovative assessment solutions across verticals for educational institutions, students and businesses. Initially, the focus was on skills related to online learning/teaching. As the pandemic became less severe in 2021, other aspects of professional development were also brought in. Heads of Institutions (HOIs) participated in the latter stages of the discussions with Educafe and in turn, discussed the revised content of the CPD program with their teachers. Four rounds of discussions were held between MES and the Educafe teams between March and May 2022.

On 17th June, MES and Educafe Student Solutions P. Ltd (ESSPL) finally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to offer the CPD program to about 250 teachers of the MES schools and PU colleges. The overall objectives are to familiarise teachers with blended teaching, enhance their 'toolkit' so that they use methodology/technology appropriate to the content and context, make them relate to, engage and communicate better with students, augment their personal productivity through self-learning and collaboration, promote self-understanding and self-analysis and draw them towards inter-disciplinary knowledge and social realities.

The intention is to offer the program from June to August 2022 and review its impact during academic year 2022-23. Based on this, booster sessions will be held in February/March, 2023 and the CPD program will be fine-



tuned and offered during 2023-24. Thereafter, after thorough evaluation, other options such as offering the program to outside schools and PU Colleges, extending it with suitable modification to MES Degree College and Institute of Management (IOM) will be explored. During the first two years, faculty from the MES Teachers College (MESTC) will act as observers and counsellors of the CPD program.

The Way Forward

Given their history and geography, MES institutions have not been able to develop extensive campuses. Now when MES is in a better placed to invest in property, real estate prices and building byelaws and regulations have combined to limit the options open to the Management. The only way MES can overcome this limitation is by investing aggressively on human resources to attract the right teachers, retain them by continuing to offer good benefits and empower them through replicable, scalable CPD programs.

Both the MESCAA and CPD initiatives launched this month are baby steps in a long journey that promises to be as exciting as it is challenging. I hope that the alumni, not only of the MES College, but also of the other institutions can step up and play a meaningful part in it.



My best wishes to all the students, staff and alumni for Academic Year 2022-23.

Sincerely,

S Krishna Kumar,

Hon. President,

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30th June 2022

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