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A significant milestone

From a fledgling college in 1947 to a full-fledged institution promoting the cause of women's education, the Stella Maris College has come a long way. As it triumphantly celebrates its golden jubilee year, a happy coincidence with that of Free India, it boasts of scores of academic achievements and developmental milestones in its glorious history.

Started in three cramped halls, with a strength of 32 students in 1947, Stella Maris today occupies a sprawling 22-acre campus with 2,300 students and 119 faculty on its rolls.

A significant landmark in its five-decade annals was securing autonomy in 1987. Academic freedom brought with it a plethora of innovations in course planning, testing and evaluation. Adopting an independent path, the college has redefined its curriculum and reset its academic clock to prepare students for the 21st Century challenges.

Considering the fact that students' careers are spawned and shaped on the campus, the college "has evolved a curriculum that promises to make education more creative and job-oriented," says Sister Annamma Phillip, Principal. Original subject combinations are offered to students to sustain their academic interest and involvement. For instance, vocational courses like Tourism for B.Com. and B.A. History, Food Science and Quality Control for B.Sc. Chemistry, Botany and Zoology, functional Hindi for B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com. and Functional English for B.A. Literature are a big draw among students, for they not only offer a break from monotony, but also emphasise on on-the-job training, the Principal adds.

Under the General Electives too, there are practical courses like Visual Experience, Textile Arts, Basic Photography, Theatre, Women's Writing, Folklore of Tamil Nadu, Herbal Therapy etc.

Completion of 10 years of autonomy was the right time to launch the "credit-based system" of education. Introduced in the current academic year, this system aims to



At the convocation ceremony. — Pic by V.Ganesan

provide broad-based education by allowing students greater flexibility in choice of courses at basic and advanced levels. It also enables the highly motivated students gain extra credits, according to Sister Annamma Phillip.

To mark its 50th year, the College has introduced its Golden Jubilee Scholarship Scheme under which 50 meritorious students stand to benefit with a scholarship of Rs. 30,000 each. The Golden Jubilee agenda also includes the dedication of a multi-storeyed building which will house the administrative offices, a computer centre and some

become large-minded, responsible citizens with strong social concerns, ready to face challenges at home and in society."

The Functional Literacy Programme, Women's Studies Cell, Women's Entrepreneurial Development Programme, Environment Awareness Programme, Writing Centre, Inter-Disciplinary Orientations, etc have helped the students hone their various faculties and bring to fruition their latent talents.

Incidentally, at the convocation held recently for the year 1996, the Principal announced that "despite the multifarious activities undertaken by the students, the College has been able to maintain a steady academic record. The pass percentage was 77 per cent in B.A., 84 per cent in B.Sc. and 96 per cent in B.Com. In the post-graduate courses too it was well over 90 per cent."

As the College turns 50, the spirit of freedom and its accompanying confidence are evident in the bold new academic experiments pursued with relentless pragmatism.

T. KRITHIKA REDDY

EVENT

classrooms in August.

Just striving for academic excellence has not been Stella Maris' motto. Extra-curricular activities, social awareness programmes and value education have also been given equal impetus. "The thrust is on all-round development of students. To prepare them to