

DECCAN HERALD

Nurturing the young entrepreneur

CAMPUS WATCH Varshini Murali learns that there is more to the brand name of Jain University from a visit to its group institution campus

Jain University, one among the 70 odd institutions that comprise the Jain Group of Institutions (JGI), is best known in Bangalore for offering the best business-oriented academic disciplines. A closer look, however, reveals a slightly different picture — while Commerce and Business still find majority favour among students in this institution, Jain University has a lot more to offer.

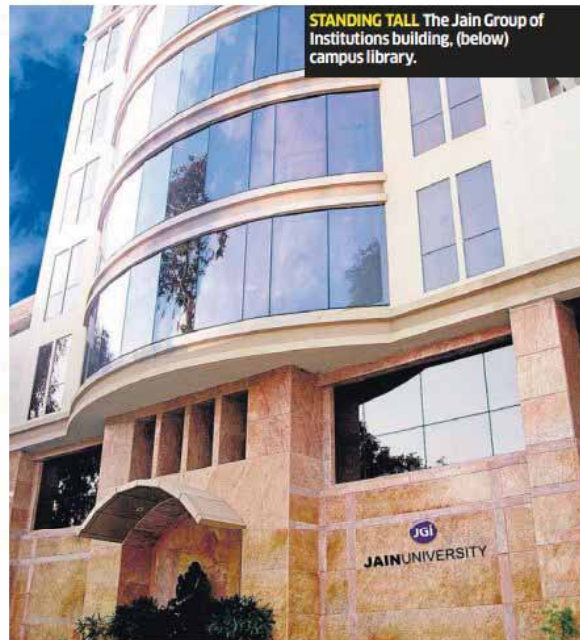
Set up in 1990 as Sri Bhagwan Mahaveer Jain College, this institute was awarded university status in 2009. In the 22 years that have passed, Aparna Prasad, Director — Corporate Affairs of the JGI group, insists that Jain University has sought to help students, through its educational enterprise, “discover themselves.” “We nurture entrepreneurs,” Aparna reveals, as she explains the university’s belief that entrepreneurs are not only born but also “made.” I’m handed a brochure on the university as Aparna proceeds to list out just how this institute can open up a world of possibilities to the prospective student. Flipping through the pages, a few phrases catch my eye. Aside from the usual tag of being a “hub for entrepreneurs,” the brochure also highlights the university’s “passion for arts and unparalleled sports.”

Streams of study

In the current educational climate, where medicine and engineering rule the roost, one does not come across many well-established institutes in India heralding its support for the liberal arts, encouraging athletic ambitions and such like. In this regard, however, Jain University has gone that one step further by offering a plethora of disciplines, across a wide range of fields, for a student to choose from. Around eight undergraduate programmes — Arts, Commerce, Science, Computer Application, Interior Design, Business Management, Media Studies and Engineering — and around 15 post graduate degrees are being offered at this university, not to mention, a few doctorate and research programmes as well.

There is a fair degree of variety and specialisation here. Sample this: the university’s Master of Arts course includes subjects such as classical dance (Bharatanatyam) and classical music (Carnatic/Hindustani). Painting and Applied Art are also offered as subjects one could study at the post graduate level. Forensic Science too is an option, not just at the PG level, but at the under graduation as well. The much sought-after subject of Aerospace Engineering is also offered here, a notable feature indeed.

At the doctorate level, Jain University offers PhD programmes in 28 disciplines. These fall under five broad heads — Languages, Social Sciences and Humanities, Science, Commerce and Management, and Engineering. While discussing the



STANDING TALL The Jain Group of Institutions building, (below) campus library.



university’s many centres of research, R Chenraj Jain, Chairman of the JGI, draws attention to the Centre for Disaster Mitigation and the Centre for Ancient Indian History and Culture, both established under Jain University. “The Centre for Disaster Mitigation,” he explains, is involved in, “research, testing and consultancy in areas such as earthquakes, floods and drought, fire safety engineering and industrial waste utilisation. It aims to cater to the ever-increasing need for an effective system of disaster mitigation. The Centre

for Ancient Indian History and Culture focuses on analysing ancient Indian history, reviewing works on *Vedic* culture; one of their main areas of research being ‘*Vriksha Ayurveda*.’”

Sporting nature

A vast number of students at Jain University have been supported and encouraged to realise their goals in their chosen sport. Be it Pankaj Advani, Shikha Tandon, Robin Uthappa, Rohan Bopanna or Rehan Pooncha, all combined sport and study at Jain

University in perfect proportion. The university also offers scholarships to athletes who compete at the national or international level, to help them meet the costs accrued at such high levels of participation. This scheme, I’m given to understand, also includes a personal academic coach along with a tuition-fee waiver.

Festive spirit

There are a wide number of fests that are organised at Jain University — ‘Precipice — All India Management Fest’, ‘Lasya’, ‘Threshold’ and ‘Abhinaya’, to name a few. While ‘Threshold’ entertains first-year management students, ‘Lasya’ is the first inter-collegiate national level cultural event being organised this year. ‘Abhinaya’, on the other hand, is an annual theatre festival that aims to identify true talent on-stage.

Social service

Students are encouraged to give back to society through Jain University’s National Service Scheme, where students learn to appreciate a second point-of-view, that is, show consideration toward other living beings. On the other hand, students who make the cut are also urged to join the National Cadet Corps, as an effective method through which one could gain leadership skills, and learn the importance of “responsibility and resourcefulness.” And by being a part of the Community Radio (90.4 MHz), students not only get hands-on journalistic training, but also help develop a sense of social awareness by broadcasting programmes on education, sport, health, environment etc.

Scholarships and placements

As far as scholarships are concerned, the university provides scholarships in categories such as academics, sports, music and dance, literary activities, community service and for those who are specially challenged. A total of 500 scholarships have been awarded so far, across all these categories. The university witnesses a good placement rate each year; recruiters include companies such as Dell, IBM, Tesco, Honeywell, Google, Goldman Sachs, Unilever etc.

Such corporate organisations, Aparna adds, are involved not just at the recruitment stage, but also earlier, through knowledge sharing and fostering creativity through learning. As she puts it, “the hallmark of this institution is that it goes beyond the routine. There is a certain degree of flexibility offered to a student of this university, something which might be difficult to come by elsewhere, as students are encouraged to pursue their passions alongside getting a basic education. We encourage them to dream,” she adds, highlighting the institute’s moral support and involvement in helping the student’s aspirations come true.