

## **Education to Emancipation: Women's Journey to Self-actualization**

KAHM Unity Women's College, Manjeri, demonstrates a commitment to women's empowerment and community engagement through innovative and inclusive educational practices. Established in 1991, this institution is the first women's college in the state in the aided sector after delinking the pre-degree course. With 32 years of success in the Kerala higher education sector, the college has significantly contributed to the empowerment of women through education, fostering the development of an egalitarian society. This mission has enabled the institution to contribute to social upliftment, financial autonomy, security, and the growth of the women workforce in the state and nation.

The distinctiveness of the institution lies in its focus on "Education to Emancipation: Women's Journey to Self-actualization". Under the aegis of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), the college has organized various programmes at the department level, through clubs, cells, and forums, and with support from the alumni association to achieve this goal. The institution organises its efforts around five strategic focus areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, empowerment, and emancipation.

1. **Education:** The institution is committed to providing quality education that equips women with the skills needed for the 21st century. Over the past five years, the institution has achieved a pass of 93%, reflecting its dedication to providing students with an educational foundation for building better lives. To ensure the integration of empowerment within quality education, the college organised sessions on professional skills, the effective use of ICT, weekly research seminars, awareness programmes on the needs of visually impaired individuals, webinars on 21st-century life skills, internship opportunities, and the observance of National Education Day.

These activities are designed to foster critical thinking, adaptability, and lifelong learning skills, enabling students to face contemporary challenges. By offering a curriculum that merges academic excellence with personal development, the college ensures that its students are well-prepared to become active contributors to society. The commitment to inclusive and progressive education is central to the role of institution in shaping confident, knowledgeable, and self-aware women.

2. **Employment:** Recognising the importance of employment as a pathway to empowerment, the institution has implemented various programmes aimed at securing jobs for its students. Approximately 65% of the graduates of the institution are employed at national and international levels. Of the 8,000 students who have graduated from the college, over 6,500 have benefited from career guidance and support, demonstrating the institution's effectiveness in helping students achieve their professional aspirations. The college has organized placement drives, mock tests for competitive exams like CAT, sessions on career and research opportunities, ABACUS training, and

15-day on-the-job training programmes. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that students are equipped with the practical skills and confidence needed to succeed in the job market. By emphasizing employability, the institution contributes to the economic independence of its graduates, enabling them to support themselves and their families and contribute positively to their communities.

**3. Entrepreneurship:** Institution invests heavily in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among its students. Through the entrepreneurship development club and alumni association, the institution offers various programmes that encourage students to explore new business opportunities and develop innovative solutions. Active participation in social media platforms has provided students with new opportunities to venture into entrepreneurship. Many students earn significant income through activities such as baking, creating marriage-related content creation and souvenirs, and participating in earn-while-learn programmes, with some earning over 30,000 rupees per month.

The college has organized workshops on wooden mural art, entrepreneurship awareness programmes, mushroom cultivation, paper and bag-making workshops, certificate course on ornamentation, doll-

making, and a diet clinic. These initiatives not only enhance students' entrepreneurial skills but also enable them to become job creators rather than job seekers. By empowering students to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, the institution helps them realize their potential as innovators and contributors to economic growth.

**4. Empowerment:** Education at Unity Women's College goes beyond academics to focus on holistic empowerment. The institution aims to empower students to become better decision-makers within their families, communities, and professional lives. Empowerment initiatives encompass physical fitness, psychological well-being, and health and diet awareness, ensuring a comprehensive approach to personal development.

Gender audit, conducted by IQAC, have provided valuable insights into areas where further efforts are needed to achieve equality and empowerment. The college has organized workshops on personality development, yoga sessions for mental well-being, sessions on gender discrimination, premarital education, traffic awareness campaigns, and listening skills workshops. Additionally, a blog for the Women's Cell has been created to provide a platform for student voices and concerns. These efforts ensure that students are not only empowered in the academic sphere but also in their personal and social lives.

**5. Emancipation:** Many students at the college are first-generation learners, making the role of the institution in their empowerment even more crucial. The efforts towards emancipation include conducting surveys to understand generational dynamics and maternity status among students under

the IQAC. Through these initiatives, the college has been able to identify areas where support is needed and organize targeted programmes for the emancipation of students from marginalized backgrounds. By focusing on social transformation and parity, the institution has enabled students to transcend societal barriers and achieve equality. These programmes aim to uplift students from the margins and empower them to become social engineers, contributing to nation-building and community development. The emphasis on social justice and equality ensures that students not only gain knowledge but also become agents of change in their societies.

The commitment of the institution to “Education to Emancipation: Women’s Journey to Self-actualization” has created a transformative impact on the lives of its students. The focus on quality education, employment opportunities, entrepreneurial skills, empowerment, and emancipation ensures that students are equipped to face the challenges of the modern world with confidence and competence. As a result, the institution has not only contributed to the upliftment of women in Malappuram District and beyond but has also played a vital role in the broader goal of building an egalitarian society.