

## **Institutional Distinctiveness**

Research shows that educational experiences that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning. When institutions provide opportunities for students to learn both autonomously and with others and to develop their sense of competence, students are more likely to be motivated to succeed. To become engaged, students must feel they are accepted and affirmed. They must feel they belong to an institution.

With this spirit in mind, the distinctiveness of Gargi college entails ensuring that its institutional culture is welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds. With its vision of empowering students and guiding them incrementally towards emotional, social and academic skills necessary for successful self-management and responsible independence. Students are given ample opportunities to develop leadership qualities by assuming different roles in classroom, cultural societies, sports, department associations, NSS, NCC, placement cell, etc. In our approach within the goal of responsible independence lies a deeper aim of building in our students the capacity to relate their behaviour to the good of all. Such leadership opportunities benefit students because they are able to step up and take charge in a leadership role. This gives them the courage to lead others through their words and, most importantly, their actions as well as give them freedom to struggle and find the best ways of handling their struggles.

Responsibility is exciting and empowering for students. When students are given larger responsibilities such as planning, organizing, executing and assessing, combined with the belief that they can succeed, they have everything they need to meet and exceed expectations. Through active participation by students either as convenors or members of different associations/societies, they get to develop the desirable and much needed self and social awareness skills, communicative and collaborative skills, emotional management and decision making skills. Along with giving freedom to students to evolve and grow at their pace, the institution also believes in locating the responsibility for mentoring students upon the teachers who make sure that they are available to the students as they perform tasks. This allows the mentor to be able to clarify the young students' nuanced questions and the subtle discrepancies from the norm or the expected outcome that many a times arise during the workflow. This mentoring for students helps them to feel more connected and engaged on campus, which can ultimately improve student outcomes.