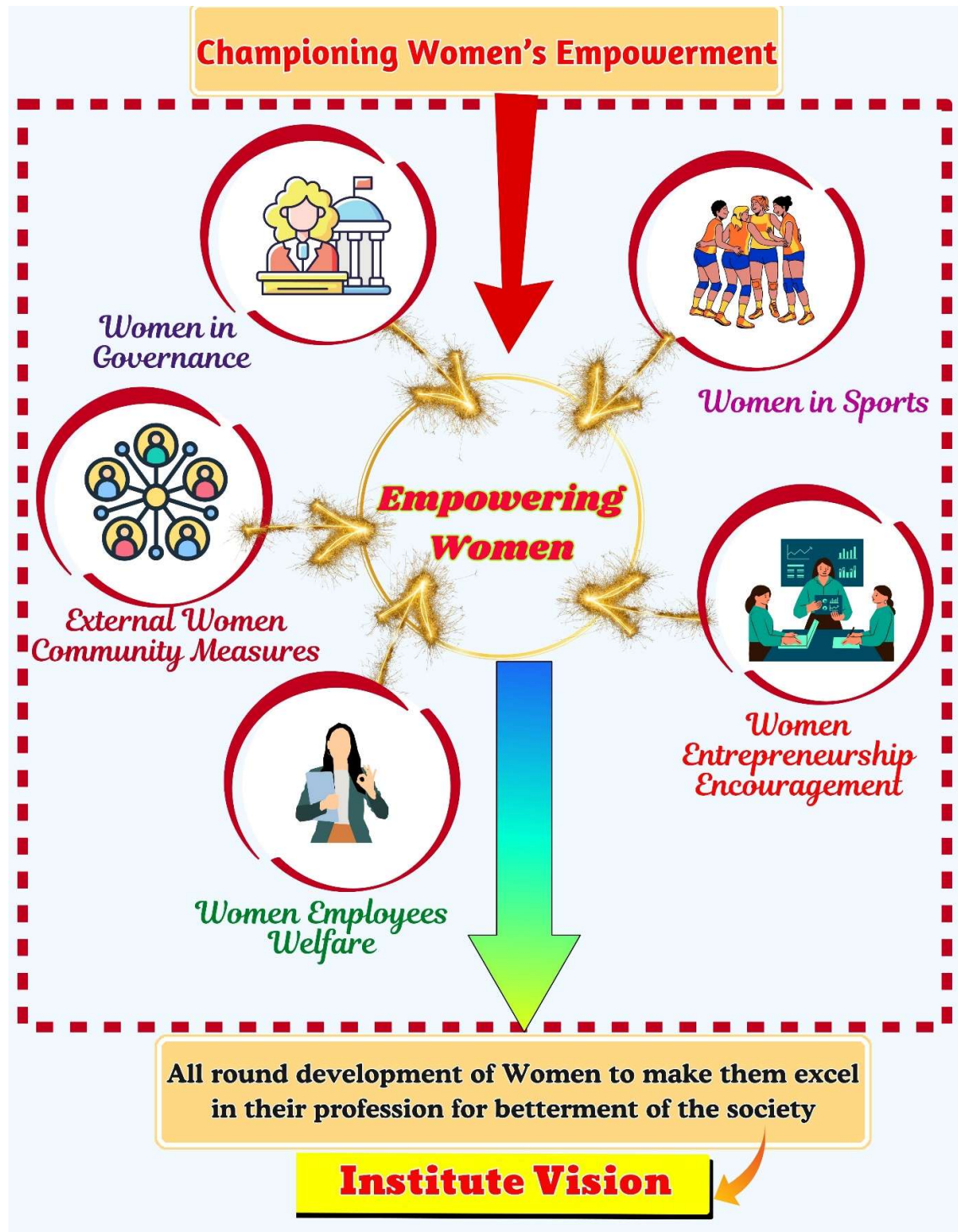


7.3. Institutional Distinctiveness:

**“Championing Women’s Empowerment: VISTAS
Distinctive Initiatives”**

MAPPING OF INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS WITH VISION OF VISTAS



INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS

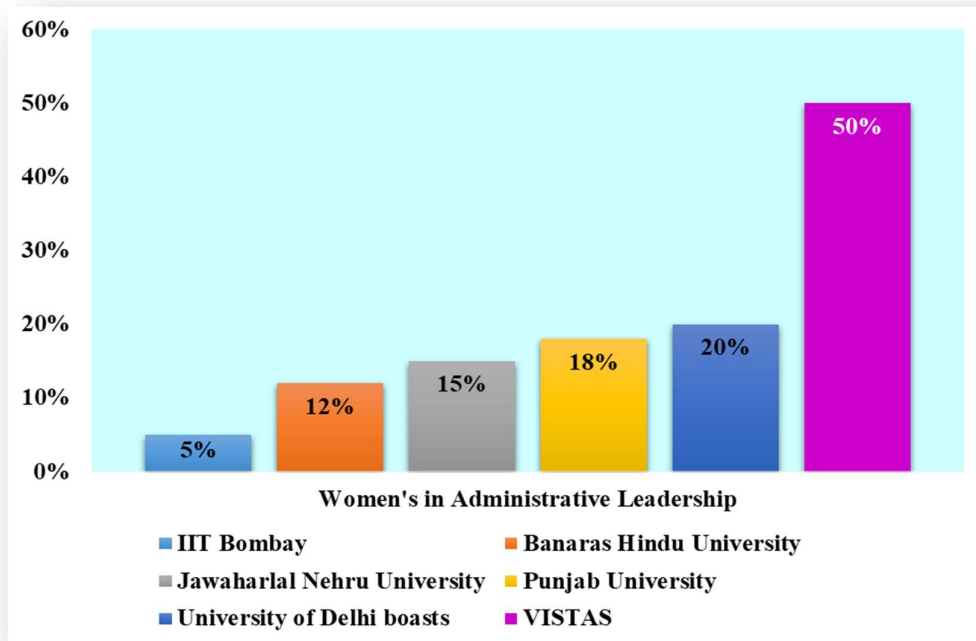
"Championing Women's Empowerment: VISTAS' Distinctive Initiatives"

In recent years, Indian universities have increasingly recognized the importance of women empowerment, although significant gaps remain in leadership roles. For instance, the University of Delhi boasts approximately 49% female enrolment but only about 20% representation in administrative leadership. Similarly, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) sees women making up 45% of its student body, yet female leaders occupy around 15% of senior roles. In the realm of technology, IIT Bombay reports a mere 17% female enrolment and about 5% in senior administrative positions. In contrast, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has nearly 40% female enrolment, with women holding about 12% of leadership positions. Punjab University also has approximately 48% female students, with women occupying about 18% of leadership roles. While these institutions are actively working towards gender equality through various initiatives, such as mentorship programs, workshops, and advocacy efforts there remains a pressing need to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership across Indian universities. Barriers include limited access to education, discriminatory practices, dual responsibilities, and societal stereotypes. Women possess valuable skills for leadership but face challenges in career advancement. Increased female representation in management is essential for equitable decision-making and societal progress¹.

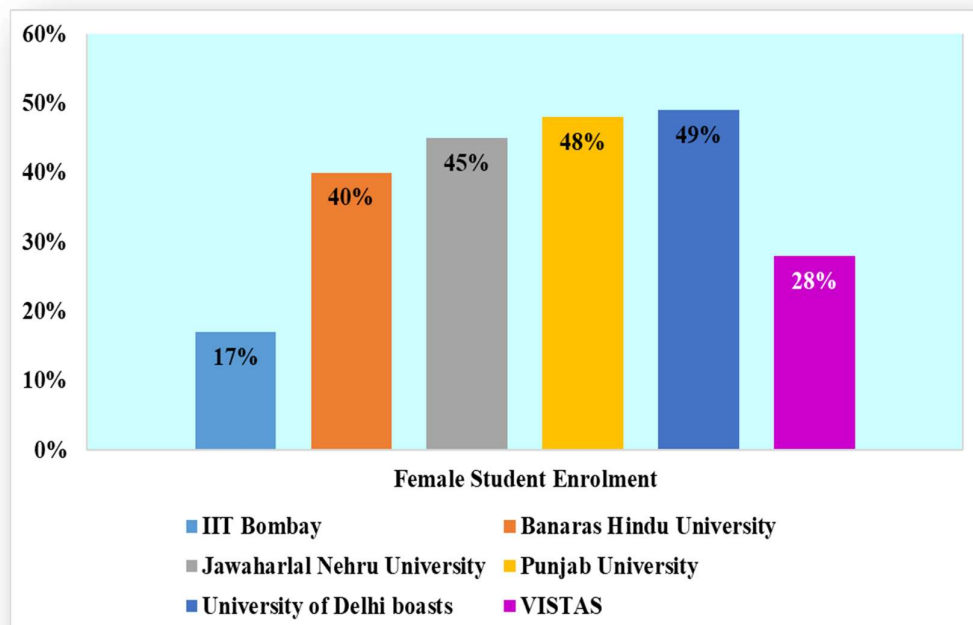
At Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), we take pride in informing Women Empowerment in the field of Teaching / Non-Teaching. **Our administration comprises 50% women** and 50% men, while **female faculty members make up 58%** of our teaching staff compared to 42% male faculty. **Women represent 34% of non-teaching positions**, with men making up the remaining 66%. **An outstanding 90% of our supporting staff are women**, while 10% are men. Although **women currently constitute 28% of our student body**, we are actively working to enhance this representation through targeted outreach and scholarship programs. Through various initiatives, we aim to empower women and create a dynamic academic environment that enhances innovation, creativity, and excellence in education.

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan or self-reliant India is the vision of new India. To fulfil the Country's Vision women's empowerment plays a major role through skill development, providing financial assistance, developing entrepreneurs. **VISTAS empowers women through skill development programs, provides financial support to develop entrepreneurs, conducts self-help groups bazaar** to sell their products etc., VISTAS initiative aims to **enhance women's economic participation, driving self-reliance and contributing to national growth.**

I.Gandhi, M. and Sen, K., 2021. Missing women in Indian university leadership: Barriers and facilitators. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 49(2), pp.352-369.



**Comparison of Women's Administrative Leadership
(VISTAS Vs Leading Indian Universities)**



**Comparison of Female Student Enrolment
(VISTAS Vs Leading Indian Universities)**

Women's Participation in VISTAS

S.No	Category	Women Percentage
1	Administration	50 %
2	Teaching	58 %
3	Non-Teaching	34 %
4	Supporting Staffs	90 %
5	Students	28 %

Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies (VISTAS) is committed towards complying with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all its practices and the Institution's efforts to meet up **Women Empowerment** is very distinct. Imbibing the spirit of Women Empowerment percolates from the Management to all the members of the Institution.

In this journey of building a Women empowered Institution which fosters growth and development of women VISTAS follows a meticulous approach.

I. Measures Taken Towards Women Empowerment in Governance

VISTAS believes that the role of women in governance and leadership is a strategic imperative which will drive innovation and bring out success for the institution. Women representation is ensured at all levels starting from the Executive Council the apex body governing VISTAS with the Vice President and Pro- Chancellor, Academics being women to the various committees formed to ensure smooth functioning of the institution. 69 % Female (Teaching, Non- Teaching staffs and Girl Students are members of the various committees in VISTAS.

With 35 women involved in academic governance in positions such as Deans, Directors & HODs of various Schools and Departments of the University and 17 women in non-academic governance in positions such as Deputy Registrar, Assistant Registrar, VISTAS is poised towards augmenting Women's Voices in Governance.

II. Measures taken towards Women Empowerment in Sports

VISTAS Women in Sports

VISTAS women in sports highlight the University's commitment to supporting and promoting women's participation and excellence in sports.

- Winner & Runner-Up in Senior State Beach Volleyball Championship
- Senior National Sailing Championship won by VISTAS student Ms. Ishwariya Ganesh
- Bronze Medal at 36th National Games by VISTAS students in Senior Tamilnadu Women's Football Team in the 36th National Games
- Girls Basketball Team gave a tough fight and came out as the runners up in the interuniversity tournament organized by Amity University.

By providing support, resources, and opportunities for women athletes to compete and succeed, VISTAS is helping to break gender barriers in sports and empower women.

VISTAS honoured Indian Women Sports Personalities with Honorary Doctorate degree (D. Litt).

VISTAS conducts regular Annual Sports Meet in which women students and faculty actively participate in various events Chess, Carrom, Badminton, Throwball, Table Tennis and various athletic events in large numbers and won several prizes. The Indian Football Team Captain K.Indumathi was the Chief Guest for the recently held Annual sports meet and distributed prizes to the winners.

III. Measures to Encourage Women Entrepreneurs

VFUND – Seed Funding for Women Entrepreneurs

V Fund is a startup pitch event wherein women entrepreneurs pitch their business proposals to the jury members. The worthy proposals were selected based on the Novelty of the idea, trajectory, future prospects and scalability. The initiative started in the year 2021 and 4 cohorts of women entrepreneurs have been funded. **V Fund has been provided to 12 women entrepreneurs from 2021 to 2024 and a seed funding of Rs.20 lakhs has been given by VISTAS to women entrepreneurs.**

Women Entrepreneurs from different domains like Development of AI assisted BOT for diagnosis in optometry, Pregnant and child care, Personal care products, Oncology medicine, Art courses, Ortho care Foot wear, Organic health care products, Wooden toys and gift manufacturing have been provided V Fund. The women entrepreneurs benefitted out of this have used the funds to scale up their business. VISTAS also has assigned mentors for each of the 12 women entrepreneurs. With the expertise and guidance of the mentors the women entrepreneurs are poised for growth in their business.

IV. Measures to Ensure Welfare of Women Employees

Free Transport to Women Employees

Transportation facility has been extended free of cost to all women employees who commute through the University Bus. So far 225 Women Employees have been benefitted out of this welfare measure.

Women Health Awareness Programme

VISTAS conducts Women Health Awareness Program on Breast Cancer & Importance of Cervical Cancer Vaccine free awareness program every consecutive year. It has benefited around 120 female students and 230 teaching and non—teaching staff members.

Ladies Common Room

Ladies Common Room is available for female faculty and non -teaching staff to avail if needed.

Child Care Assistance

Creche Facility is available in VISTAS for female faculty members who wish to avail of child care assistance in the campus.

Maternity Leave

Maternity leave benefits are provided to all women faculty members.

V. Measures for External Women Community

- a. **VISTAS Maternity Scheme:** VISTAS has implemented & follows the “Champion equality through community initiatives and advocacy” through the maternity scheme in Vels Medical College and Hospital (VMCH). Under this scheme, each antenatal mother

who confirms pregnancy receives complete medical benefits free of cost throughout her maternity period is from the day of confirmation till her delivery and also after that up to her family planning. Once she registers in the **VISTAS** maternity scheme, she is eligible to obtain complete maternity scheme benefits from VMCH which include free-of-cost investigations, medical treatment, health education about diet, exercise, mental health, delivery procedure, and family planning treatment. She is eligible to get monetary benefits (of Rs.12,000 to Rs.20,000) after her safe delivery. To date, more than 130 antenatal mothers have benefitted from various places in and around Chennai.

- b. **Women Achievers Awards:** VISTAS celebrates the achievements of women across various fields through the Women Achiever Awards during International Women's Day celebrations every year. By honoring exemplary women, the institution inspires future generations to strive for excellence.
- c. **Support for Women Self-Help Groups (SHG):** The institution provides a marketplace for Women Self-Help Groups, enabling them to showcase their products and generate income. This annual event not only promotes economic empowerment but also celebrates the creativity and craftsmanship of women entrepreneurs. As part of the event a workshop is conducted on the sources of financing, marketing skills, avenues in digital marketing and social media.
- d. **Women's Training Programs:** VISTAS organizes training programs on upscaling indigenous and traditional knowledge especially in rural communities. Training women in skills such as making jute bags, artificial jewellery, and vegetable Nutri Garden setup equips them with income-generating opportunities that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. This promotes sustainable livelihoods and reduces dependence on external sources of income. Training programs enhance the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of women, enabling them to take on leadership roles and participate more actively in socio-economic development initiatives within their communities.
- e. **Women Privilege Card:** VISTAS issued a Women's Privilege Identity card is given to all female patients of all ages at Vels Medical College and Hospital. Those who enrolled in this card will be getting certain privileges among others. This is not only

helpful for them and also for their family members to get the quality standard medical care.

Distinguished Women Alumni of VISTAS

1. Dr. Meenakshi Vijayakumar, Additional Director (I), Tamilnadu Fire and Rescue Services, Govt of Tamilnadu. Dr Meenakshi Vijaykumar is first women fire officer in India
2. Dr Meenakash Ramesh, Director, Vels Group of Schools.
3. Ms. Pallavi, Lead Data Scientist, Here Technologies, Mumbai
4. Dr. Shamini Senthilkumar, Managing Director, Organogenik biotech pvt Ltd
Chennai
5. Ms. Swarna B.S, Cabin Crew, Singapore Airlines
6. Dr. Selvi Santhosam, Clinical Physiotherapist, Rajiv Gandhi Govt. General Hospital, Chennai. Dr Selvi Santhosam is the first transwoman Physiotherapist to serve in government hospital.
7. Dr.S.Subhashini, General Manager Empire Smart Freight LLC, Dubai
8. Dr. Ansem George, Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Forensic Psychiatry, Guild Lodge hospital, UK.
9. Ms.Saranya, Manager – Operations South East Asia, DahNAY Logistics Vietnam Co., Ltd.
10. Ms. Maivizhi Maharaja, Project Manager- Digital Marketing, UK- House of Lords, UK Parliament
11. Ms. Aswin Annie, HR Generalist, Indo Arab, Qatar.

At VISTAS, Women empowerment is not merely a buzzword; it is a guiding principle —a commitment to creating an environment where every woman has the opportunity to thrive, to lead, and to excel. VISTAS strives for equality and inclusion in everything it does, every single day of the year.

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