

# Dr Daphne Pillai Nurtures Young Minds

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Educationist Dr Daphne Pillai speaks to **Bhavana Doifode** about providing high quality education to our country's youth and skill-based training to marginalised women.

With state-of-the-art laboratories, spacious auditoriums, up-to-date libraries with digital and physical books, language labs, seminar and conference rooms, 24-hour WiFi connectivity, spacious classrooms and more, the Pillai Group of Institutions in different parts of Maharashtra provide a stimulating educational environment.

Dr Daphne Pillai, the co-founder of the Pillai Group of Institutions and Chairperson, Management Board, Mahatma Education Society, believes in providing the right environment which will enable students to fulfill their ambitions. To help their students reach for the

stars, the institution has also been taking students on a cross-cultural exchange program - where they are exposed to the workings of Fortune 500 companies like Microsoft, Google, Genentech, Oracle, Paypaletc - to the Saint Mary's College of Business and Economics, California, USA.

Excerpts from our *tête-à-tête* with her...

## **What are your work mantras?**

Having being in the field for 40 years, we lay great emphasis on leadership through example. We are very hands-on, very approachable to all our students, their parents, teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **Tell us about the Mahatma Education Society (MES).**

The Mahatma Education Society is a trust under the Pillai Group which runs 48 educational institutions across Maharashtra. We have colleges of architecture, engineering, management studies, arts, commerce, science etc.

## **Tell us about the numerous projects you have initiated and implemented for the upliftment of women.**

We started the Adult Literacy Drive for women living in slums. We've also started a range of learning options. For younger girls, we initiated several skill development programs - from

beauty care and hairstyling, to desk-top printing skills, catering and hospitality. We also help the girls become entrepreneurs by negotiating with banks for loans for them.

**Give us a little insight into your family.**

My husband Dr K M Vasudevan Pillai is the visionary and founder of the Pillai Group of Institutions. We have three children - our eldest son Priam is currently the COO of the MES, Pillai Group of Institutions. Our daughter Minerva is the co-founder of US Bionics, a company in California, USA. Our youngest son Franav is currently the Deputy CEO of MES, Pillai Group of Institutions.

**How do you strike a balance between your personal and professional life?**

Family time is precious and we make sure that no matter how pressing our individual commitments may be, we have at least one meal together. We also make it a point to take a vacation together at least once a year. Reading and travelling are also excellent restoratives.