

NICHE Strategic Plan

2024-2030



NICHE
KANYAKUMARI
DEEMED-TO-BE-UNIVERSITY

Strategic Plan 2024-2030

Strategic Plan for Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education

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1. Executive Summary

Recognizing the significance of extending high-quality technical education to the rural populace in the southern most region of India, and acknowledging the indispensable role of science and technology in fostering economic and technological advancement on a national scale, the higher education institution was established in the year 1989, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education (NICHE) obtained Deemed University status from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on 8th December 2008, is dedicated to the main objective of nurturing accomplished talents for modern India.

In alignment with successful institutions across the nation, NICHE has undertaken bold initiatives to integrate various disciplines of learning and harness the vast resources of a comprehensive university. Through rigorous exploration and implementation efforts, NICHE developed a curriculum and management system at par with leading universities, both nationally and internationally. The university actively incubates high-tech courses and encourages students to transform knowledge into actionable power.

NICHE is committed to provide quality education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, while engaging in scientific research and technology developments. Engineering programs cover a broad spectrum of research areas, reflecting the cutting-edge studies pursued by the faculty and departments. Interdisciplinary approach extends to traditional disciplines like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and English, with significant applicability and elevates research and educational capabilities to international standards.

By fostering innovation, industry collaborations, and academic excellence, NICHE plays a pivotal role in driving the economical growth both in industry, and education sector, and contributing to India's journey towards knowledge superpower.

2. Introduction

Institution established as an Engineering College in 1989, had a vision to transform into a distinguished center of excellence in higher education through uncompromising standards of discipline and ethics. The institution's commitment to excellence was recognized in 2006 by Anna University with a ranking as the 19th Best Engineering College.

In 2007 subsequently in 2008, Institution received accreditation from the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and was designated as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (SIRO). It achieved ISO 9001:2000 certification, further attesting to its commitment to quality and academic excellence. The pivotal journey came in 2008 when NICHE was accorded Deemed-to-be-University status and was awarded Grade 'A' by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 2015 and reaccruited by NAAC in 2022.

In the year 2016, ranking by NIRF, NICHE secured 66th Rank in the Engineering Stream and 75th Rank in the University Stream, affirming its position, as a leading educational institution. Presently, NICHE has 11 faculties and 24 departments offering a diverse array of undergraduate, postgraduate and research programs in the field of Engineering, Arts, Science and Management disciplines.

All academic programs offered by NICHE have approvals from relevant statutory bodies such as the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), University Grants Commission (UGC), Director General of Shipping (DGS) and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). NICHE is a proud member of esteemed organizations like International Association of Universities (IAU), Association of Indian Universities (AIU), National Academic Depository (NAD) and National Digital Library of India (NDL).

NICHE has made significant strides in research and innovation, with 3016 publications indexed in Scopus, with an impressive 'h index' of 56, accompanied by more than 10583 citations. Moreover, NICHE has 179 files and published patents and 31 patents have already been granted, emphasizing its commitment to pioneering research and technological advancement.

Education not only enrich the minds with invaluable knowledge but also enhance the capacity for critical thinking, analysis and understanding of the world around. It serves as a gateway to new perspectives, ideologies, beliefs and cultures, broadening the horizons and enriching human lives.

Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education (NICHE) has established itself as a beacon of collaborative learning, drawing upon the best practices from around the globe to foster innovation and creativity. We are committed to provide students with ample opportunities to apply their knowledge as innovators and to be valuable contributors to society.

With over 70 years of dedicated service in education, NICHE has emerged as one of the premier Deemed University, accredited for the second cycle by NAAC. NICHE mission extends beyond academic excellence to encompass the holistic development of the students, promoting inclusivity, diversity and provides an excellent learning environment.

Under the visionary leadership of the Honorable Chancellor, **Dr. A. P. Majeed Khan**, NICHE aspires to be a world-class center of excellence in training, research, and innovation. NICHE commitment to excellence is exemplified by the successful launch of NIUSAT, a nano-satellite developed by the faculty and students.

NICHE offers a welcoming and supportive atmosphere where students are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas. Dedicated faculty members are committed to nurture the next generation of leaders and provide the latest technological tools and resources to maximize their potential.

NICHE, is a vibrant academic community, where academic excellence is coupled with strong emphasis on personal growth and development. The higher education journey at NICHE promises an enriching and rewarding career with plethora of opportunities for academic and extracurricular pursuits.

NICHE, being the temple of learning where innovation meets excellence, and embarks on a journey of knowledge, growth, and transformation.

3. Vision, Mission and Quality Policy

Vision

To be a globally recognized institution of excellence in higher education and research, dedicated to fostering innovation and to equip students with the skills, expertise and global competence necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving technological landscape, contributing to the nation's progress.

Mission

To impart holistic development of our students with high standards of discipline, ethics and integrity and nurture enlightened individuals dedicated to serve humanity with focused research in cutting-edge areas of science and technology, thereby contributing meaningfully to societal progress.

Quality Policy

A Commitment to continually improve Research, teaching and learning process by providing state-of-the-art infrastructure and expertise to create an environment of Quality education and develop a quality culture within the University.

4. SWOC Analysis

Strength

Pristine Green Campus with a total area of 550 sprawling acres and with a built-up area of 27 lakh square feet.

Satellite Space Research Centre with a fully functional Mission Control Centre, Clean Room and Checkout Facility and Ground Station inside the University campus.

State of the art Research Centre for Robotics and Artificial Intelligence for the study and the development of Humanoid robots.

Exceptional computational infrastructure with cutting-edge 12th Generation Desktop Systems featuring the latest Intel i7 and i9 processors.

Fully functional NICHE Private Cloud Infrastructure to provide exposure and training in latest computational technology.

AWS Academy at NICHE is a dynamic educational initiative that empowers students with the knowledge and skills required for the ever-evolving world of cloud computing, machine learning and related technologies.

iOS University Developer Program at NICHE opens the door to a world of innovation and application development. Partnering with Apple, NICHE equip students with the tools and knowledge to create cutting- edge iOS apps.

IBM Innovation Centre for Education at NICHE is the gateway to a world of technological innovation. Powered by IBM, NICHE provide access to cutting-edge technology, tools and knowledge to foster creativity, problem-solving and the development of real world solutions.

CNC Lathe with all latest precision measurements installed for the automated production for desired machine parts.

3-D Printing to enable tangible examinations and assessments of designed structures.

Fully functional Ship-in Campus to provide training in marine engineering.

Four different types of Aircrafts in the campus to train the students with hands-on experience in aircraft operations, mechanism and maintenance.

Excellent Placement and Training Cell, dedicated to delivering top-notch placement training and comprehensive placement support to our valued students.

Well-stacked Library with more than 82278 Volumes, 26448 Journals, DELNET, INFELIBNET, NDLI and KNIMBUS Online Learning Platforms etc. with 24-hour access to the students and staff.

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A novel program named "NICHE-STEVE JOBS Scholarship" launched by NICHE on 3rd November 2022 and inaugurated by Shri Kris Gopalakrishnan, Co-Founder, Infosys, awarded to 100 meritorious final year students, who will receive intensive training from external industry experts to make them industry-ready.

Hosts a wide array of clubs and academies, including NCC, NSS, the Gandhi Peace Club, Defense Training Academy, Civil Service Academy, Green Energy Club, Adventure Club, Yoga Club, Arts Club, Literary Club, Innovation and Creativity Club, and the Social Service Club dedicated to blood donation.

Dedicated on-campus student accommodation facility that can comfortably house over 2000 students, ensuring a convenient and secure living arrangement for both male and female students.

Weakness

Despite the achievements, NICHE suffer from limited brand recognition compared to more established urban universities, which impact its ability to attract top-tier students and faculty members.

Unequal intake in various courses, due to employment strategy.

Securing external research funding and grants to support faculty research initiatives and infrastructure development require proactive efforts and strategic partnerships for NICHE.

Lesser connect with Alumni and its resources

Opportunities

Scope for High impact factor publications by the experienced faculty members.

Scope for augmentation of ICT tools in academic areas.

Scope for collaboration with institutions of repute at the national and international levels.

Utilization of alumni resources for "Time, Talent and Treasure" and improve alumni engagement.

Challenges

Retaining talented faculty members and providing opportunities for professional development and research support is a challenge for NICHE, potentially impacting the quality of research output.

Strengthening collaboration with industries and fostering internship opportunities, research partnerships and technology transfer initiatives require further development to enhance students' practical skills and employability.

Maintaining financial sustainability amidst increasing operational costs, fluctuating funding sources and competitive tuition fees pose a challenge for NICHE in the long run.

5. Goals and Objectives

Short-term Goals

Work closely with academic departments and faculties to ensure effective coordination of outreach activity to enhance undergraduate and post graduate admissions processes.

Support student wellbeing by providing the greatest opportunity for all students to excel and strengthen the collaboration between academic departments and faculties and central services.

Device effective means and mechanisms to portray the academic strengths, facilities and services of NICHE to the aspirants through print and electronic media and proper policies to monitor the activity and make improvements.

Open avenues for providing excellent academic experience for all the students and ensure that NICHE fully equips graduates to excel.

Design methods to improve the discovery-led research undertaken to the highest standards of rigour and integrity and provide freedom to investigate problems of significance, work with to be curiosity-driven or challenge-led.

Enhance faculty development programs to ensure teaching staff are equipped with emerging technologies and pedagogical advancements.

Upgrade campus infrastructure and facilities to provide a modern and conducive learning environment for students and faculty.

Increase industry-academia collaborations through partnerships, internships, and joint research projects and networking.

Strengthen student support services, including counselling, career guidance, and academic advising, to promote holistic student development.

Improve research funding acquisition strategies to support faculty research initiatives and infrastructure development.

Expand outreach efforts to attract more foreign students and foster diversity within the student body.

Enhance ICT tools and resources in academic and administrative areas to streamline processes and improve efficiency.

Develop and implement a strategic plan for increasing high-impact factor publications by faculty members.

Establish consultancy services and outreach programs to engage with industries and corporates, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Long-term Goals

Enhance the opportunities and support for early-career researchers.

Invest substantially in the research environment, both human assets and physical infrastructure.

Increase the scale and scope of central research fund to grow in capacity to fund major research initiatives.

Work with partners to create a world-class regional innovation ecosystem to enable NICHE to attract the best researchers and students from around the world.

Establish interdisciplinary research centers and institutes to address pressing societal challenges and contribute to knowledge creation and dissemination.

Implement sustainable practices across campus operations, including energy efficiency measures, waste reduction initiatives, and environmental education programs.

Continuously assess and adapt strategic initiatives based on feedback from stakeholders, emerging trends, and evolving needs to ensure long-term relevance and impact.

Engage with local communities through outreach programs, volunteer initiatives, and partnerships to address social, economic, and environmental issues.

Contribute to society through teaching and research activities.

6. Strategies for Implementation

Academic Excellence

Faculty Development Programs: Implement comprehensive faculty development programs to enhance teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and professional growth. This can include workshops, seminars, and mentoring programs to support faculty members in staying updated with the latest pedagogical techniques and disciplinary methods.

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Curriculum Enhancement: Continuously review and update academic curricula to ensure relevance to industry needs, emerging trends, and technological advancements. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and experiential learning opportunities to make students in mastering education.

Quality Assurance Mechanisms: Establish robust quality assurance mechanisms, including internal and external assessment processes, to monitor and evaluate the quality of academic programs, teaching methodologies and student learning outcomes. Regularly review accreditation standards and benchmark against peer institutions to maintain high standards of academic excellence.

Research Culture Promotion: Foster a vibrant research culture by providing resources, infrastructure and incentives to support faculty research initiatives. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and promote a supportive environment for scholarly inquiry and knowledge creation.

Student-Centred Learning: Prioritize student-centred learning approaches that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. Implement active learning strategies, collaborative projects and hands-on experiences to engage students and foster critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Academic Support Services: Strengthen academic support services, including tutoring, advising and academic counselling, to provide personalized assistance and guidance to students. Ensure accessibility of support services for students with diverse backgrounds and learning needs.

Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms: Implement effective assessment and feedback mechanisms to evaluate student progress, identify areas for improvement and provide timely feedback for continuous learning and development. Encourage a culture of self-reflection and continuous improvement among students and faculty.

Integration of Technology: Leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning experiences, facilitate 24x7 learning opportunities and provide access to digital resources and online learning platforms. Invest in educational technologies and infrastructure to support blended learning approaches and virtual collaboration.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Foster collaboration and partnerships with industry, government agencies and other educational institutions to enrich academic programs, provide real-world learning experiences and facilitate research collaborations.

Continuous Improvement Culture: Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging innovation, experimentation, and reflection among faculty, staff, and students. Promote a growth mind-set and a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development to sustain academic excellence over the long term.

Infrastructure Development

Comprehensive Infrastructure Assessment: Conduct a thorough assessment of existing infrastructure facilities, including academic buildings, laboratories, libraries, student accommodations, sports facilities, and administrative offices. Identify areas requiring immediate upgrades or expansion to meet the emerging needs

Long-Term Infrastructure Master Plan: Develop a long-term infrastructure master plan outlining the vision, goals, and timelines for enhancing campus infrastructure to Institutions of Eminence standards. This plan should encompass new construction projects, renovation initiatives and technology upgrades to create a modern and sustainable campus environment.

Budget Allocation and Resource Mobilization: Allocate sufficient financial resources and establish mechanisms for resource mobilization to fund infrastructure development projects. Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships, government grants and philanthropic donations and alumni contributions to supplement institutional funds.

Prioritize Critical Infrastructure Projects: Prioritize critical infrastructure projects based on their strategic importance, impact on academic programs, and alignment with NICHE objectives. Develop a prioritization framework to guide decision- making and ensure optimal utilization of resources.

Sustainable and Green Infrastructure Practices: Incorporate sustainable and environment-friendly design principles for infrastructure development projects to minimize ecological impact and promote energy efficiency, water conservation and waste reduction. Adopt green building standards and seek certifications such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) to demonstrate commitment to sustainability.

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation: Engage stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members in the planning and decision- making process for infrastructure development. Solicit feedback, ideas and suggestions to ensure that infrastructure projects meet the diverse needs and preferences of the campus community.

Project Management and Monitoring: Establish a dedicated project management office or committee responsible for overseeing infrastructure development initiatives. Implement project management practices including project planning, budgeting, scheduling, risk management and quality assurance. Regularly monitor progress, identify bottlenecks and take corrective actions to ensure timely completion of projects.

Quality Assurance and Compliance: Adhere to relevant regulatory requirements, building codes and safety standards in all infrastructure development activities. Implement quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that construction projects meet specified quality standards and comply with contractual obligations. Conduct regular inspections and audits to monitor compliance and address any deviations promptly.

Technological Integration and Innovation: Leverage technology and innovation to enhance infrastructure development processes and improve the functionality, efficiency and sustainability of campus facilities. Explore opportunities for smart infrastructure solutions, digitalization and automation to optimize resource utilization and enhance user experience.

Student Support Services

Career Counselling and Guidance: Develop comprehensive career counselling and guidance services to help students navigate the rapidly evolving job market and identify career paths aligned with their interests, skills and aspirations. Provide resources, workshops and one-on-one counselling sessions to assist students in making informed career decisions.

Industry-Relevant Skill Development: Offer industry-relevant skill development programs and workshops to equip students with the practical skills and competencies demanded by the evolving job market. Collaborate with industry partners to design training modules, internships and certification programs that address emerging trends and technologies.

Internship and Placement Assistance: Establish robust internship and placement assistance programs to facilitate experiential learning opportunities and transition students seamlessly into the workforce. Forge partnerships with leading companies and organizations to secure internship placements and job opportunities for students across diverse sectors.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Support: Foster an entrepreneurial mind-set among students and provide support for start-up ventures through entrepreneurship development programs, incubation centres, and mentorship initiatives. Encourage students to develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges and provide resources for business planning, funding and networking.

Mental Health and Well-being Services: Prioritize mental health and well-being services to support students' emotional and psychological needs amidst the pressures of academic life and career uncertainty. Offer counselling services, stress management workshops and mindfulness programs to promote mental resilience and self-care.

Technology Integration for Student Services: Leverage technology to enhance student support services, including online counselling platforms, virtual career fairs, and interactive learning resources. Implement digital tools and platforms for academic planning and access to academic resources to streamline administrative processes and improve student experience.

Financial Aid and Scholarships: Expand financial aid and scholarship opportunities to ensure access to higher education for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Establish scholarship programs based on merit, financial need and diversity criteria to support students' educational aspirations and alleviate financial barriers.

Alumni Engagement and Networking: Harness the potential of alumni networks to provide mentorship, career guidance, and networking opportunities for current students. Organize alumni events, industry panels and networking sessions to facilitate meaningful connections and knowledge sharing between students and alumni working in various industries.

Research and Innovation

Establish Research Centre of Excellence: Create specialized research centres within NICHE focusing on key areas of strength and expertise. These centres should foster interdisciplinary collaboration, attract renowned researchers and drive impactful research projects aligned with national priorities and industry needs.

Encourage Collaborative Research Projects: Foster collaboration between faculty members, industry partners and other academic institutions to undertake collaborative research projects. Facilitate networking opportunities, joint grant applications and research consortia to leverage collective expertise and resources.

Strengthen Research Infrastructure: Invest in state-of-the-art research facilities, equipment and technology platforms to support cutting-edge research across disciplines. Upgrade existing infrastructure and establish centralized research facilities to enhance accessibility and utilization by faculty and students.

Support for Early-Career Researchers: Provide targeted support and funding opportunities for early-career researchers to kick-start their research careers and establish independent research programs. Offer mentorship, training and grant writing workshops to assist researchers in securing external funding and advancing their research agendas.

Seed Funding for Pilot Projects: Allocate seed funding grants to support the initiation of pilot projects, proof-of-concept studies and preliminary research investigations. Encourage faculty members to explore innovative research ideas and generate preliminary data to strengthen future grant applications.

Capacity Building Programs: Develop capacity building programs and workshops to enhance research skills, grant writing capabilities and research ethics among faculty members and research students. Provide resources and support for professional development activities such as attending conferences, workshops and specialized training programs.

Streamlined Grant Application Process: Streamline the grant application process and provide assistance to faculty members in navigating funding opportunities, preparing grant proposals and complying with funding agency requirements. Establish a dedicated research support office or committee to provide guidance and administrative support throughout the grant application process.

Collaboration with Funding Agencies: Forge strategic partnerships and collaborations with government funding agencies, research councils, industry associations and philanthropic organizations to access funding opportunities and research grants. Actively engage with funding agencies to understand their priorities, funding mechanisms and application requirements.

Community Engagement

Needs Assessment and Stakeholder Consultation: Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the challenges, priorities, and aspirations of the nearby community and underdeveloped villages. Engage stakeholders, including community leaders, local government officials and residents, in the planning process to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

Collaborative Partnerships: Establish collaborative partnerships with local community organizations, NGOs, government agencies and other stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise and networks for community development initiatives. Foster trust, transparency and mutual respect in partnerships to ensure effective collaboration and sustainable outcomes.

Community-Based Projects: Develop and implement community-based projects that address identified needs and priorities, such as healthcare, education, sanitation, infrastructure development and livelihood enhancement. Involve community members in project planning, implementation and monitoring to promote ownership and sustainability.

Skill Development and Capacity Building: Offer skill development programs, vocational training, and capacity-building workshops to empower community members with the knowledge, skills and resources needed for economic empowerment and self-reliance. Provide training in areas such as entrepreneurship, agriculture, healthcare and technology to enhance livelihood opportunities and improve quality of life.

Education and Literacy Initiatives: Support education and literacy initiatives in the nearby community and underdeveloped villages by establishing community learning centres, libraries and adult education programs. Provide access to educational resources, digital literacy training and scholarships to promote lifelong learning and educational attainment.

Health and Wellness Programs: Promote health and wellness initiatives through awareness campaigns, health screenings and preventive healthcare services targeting common health issues in the community. Collaborate with healthcare providers, NGOs, and government agencies to improve access to healthcare services and promote healthy behaviors.

Environmental Sustainability Projects: Implement environmental sustainability projects focused on conservation, waste management, renewable energy and climate resilience to protect natural resources and promote sustainable development in the community. Raise awareness about environmental issues and engage community members in conservation efforts through tree planting, clean-up drives and eco-friendly practices.

Cultural and Heritage Preservation: Preserve and promote the cultural heritage and traditions of the local community through cultural festivals, art exhibitions, storytelling sessions and heritage preservation initiatives.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Define clear and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each strategy, reflecting the desired outcomes, outputs and impacts. Develop specific KPIs tailored to the objectives of academic excellence, infrastructure development, student support services, research and innovation and community engagement initiatives.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework outlining the scope, objectives, methodologies, timelines and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of each strategy. Align the framework with institutional goals, strategic priorities and stakeholder expectations to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

Data Collection and Reporting Mechanisms: Establish protocols and tools for collecting, managing and analyzing data related to the implementation of each strategy. Utilize a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, document reviews and performance metrics, to capture relevant information. Regularly compile, analyze and report monitoring data to stakeholders through progress reports, dashboards and presentations.

Baseline Assessment: Conduct baseline assessments to establish the current status, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to academic excellence, infrastructure development, student support services, research and innovation and community engagement. Use baseline data to set benchmarks, track progress and measure changes over time.

Regular Progress Reviews: Conduct regular progress reviews to assess the implementation status, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned for each strategy. Hold periodic meetings or review sessions with key stakeholders to review progress against objectives, identify bottlenecks and make informed decisions to address gaps or deviations from the plan.

Performance Evaluation and Impact Assessment: Evaluate the performance and impact of each strategy based on the predefined KPIs and evaluation criteria. Assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and equity of interventions in achieving desired outcomes and impacts. Use evaluation findings to identify successes, areas for improvement and actionable recommendations for future planning and decision-making.

Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination: Document and disseminate monitoring and evaluation findings, lessons learned, success stories and best practices to internal and external stakeholders. Share knowledge and insights through reports, presentations, publications and online platforms to promote learning, collaboration, and replication of effective approaches.

8. Conclusion

The strategic plans outlined for academic excellence, infrastructure development, student support services, research and innovation, and community engagement at Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education (NICHE) emphasize the commitment to fostering holistic growth and development within the institution and surrounding communities. By prioritizing academic excellence, NICHE aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills and opportunities to excel in their chosen fields and contribute meaningfully to society. Focus on infrastructure development ensures that NICHE has modern, sustainable and accessible facilities that support teaching, learning and research activities. Through comprehensive student support services, NICHE strives to address the diverse needs of students and empower them to succeed academically, professionally and personally.

Research and innovation initiatives are central to NICHE's mission, and seek to advance knowledge, drive innovation and address persistent societal challenges through cutting-edge research and collaborative partnerships. Finally, NICHE commitment to community engagement reflects the importance of social responsibility and active citizenship in helping local communities to address their needs, foster mutual learning and promote sustainable development. Together, these strategic plans form a cohesive framework for advancing NICHE's institutional vision and creating positive impact to the society.