FOR THE COMMON GOAL

Realizing that joining forces is the best solution to bridge the widening gap between them, the Industry and the Academia are increasingly lending each other support. Fronius India's setting up of the Robotic Welding Center in Kerela's Little Flower Engineering Institute is yet another motivation for the industry to follow suit.

Source: Little Flower Engineering Institute

A major industrial region in Kochi, Kalamassery houses companies like Apollo Tyres and HMT, IT/Electronics Parks like KINFRA Hi Tech Park, Startup Village, and Electronics City. Against this industrial backdrop, befitting the setting is Little Flower Engineering Institute (LFEI), an ITI (Industrial Training Institute) that has committed itself to a noble cause. Incepted in 1962 as a small workshop, the Institute has come a long way with its motive to provide guided and expert training to competent students who could not crack entrance exams to engineering or poly-technical courses, and transform them into an employable workforce.

"We realized that our ITI curriculum was insufficient to fetch our students suitable entry into the industry. There was a big gap between our courses and what the industry needed," shared Fr. Joby Aseethuparambil, Director, LFEI. This called for the revamping of the curriculum by introducing top-up courses in consultation with the manufacturing industry. Robotic Welding is one of the top-up courses that also include MRAC with HVAC & R; Fitter with Piping and Structuring Engineering; Electrical with Industrial Electrician; Electronics with Instrumentation; Civil with CAD and Revit; and MMV with TATA on-the-job training.

"These additional courses make our students uniquely employable. They are now a keenly wanted lot by specialist industries," he added.

Fronius India's initiative

In tandem with the Institute's endeavor to equip its students with the skills that can make them industry-ready, Fronius India Pvt Ltd has come forth by setting up a Robotic Welding Center in the Institute's campus.

"Fronius India thinks way ahead with a vision that new skills will be required by our future 'knowledge workers'. Thus, new effective methods to deliver training to them will always be the need of the hour," said V V Kamath, Managing Director, Fronius India.

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The company's objective through Fronius Robotic Welding Center is to train students at LFEI who aspire to join the manufacturing or engineering industry as Robotic Welding Programmers and Welding Technicians.

"As a trained personnel, they can perform the integration of robots into automated systems, create simulations to complete their studies on various applications, test the cycle time to ensure that robots are integrated effectively, and verify concept functionality. Students can also continually research on the latest innovative welding technologies for future joining applications," he added.

"Presently, finding skilled employees has become extremely difficult. It is now almost impossible for the companies to do the job on their own and outsourcing will continue if no step is taken to mend the situation. The setting up of the Center is a conscious decision to become an active participant in developing more skilled personnel in manufacturing from the Academic ecosystem comprising ITIs, Polytechnic Institutes and Technical Universities," explained Kamath.

Fronius India has installed one Robotic Welding system with its Cold Metal transfer welding power source at LFEI. For the students to become Welding Technicians, they are trained to accomplish specific welding applications i.e. MIG/MAG,CMT welding, wire arc additive manufacturing etc., to develop and program new robotic welding processes, study various base materials and fillers utilizing the arc welding process based on the type of weld joint designs, and verify the strength of welded parts through material testing.

Source: Fronius India Pvt Ltd

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V V Kamath
Managing Director
Fronius India Pvt Ltd

Source: Little Flower Engineering Institute

"It is time for our education system to rethink about the curriculum and its purpose. Today, we need individuals who are skilled in industrial automation, and in our institute, we focus on skilling them in this special area in order to transform them into workforce of world standard."

Fr. Joby Aseethuparambil
Director
Little Flower Engineering Institute (LFEI)

Collaboration is key

LFEI has been closely working with the industry to understand its requirements and accordingly groom its students. "To this end, we are into collaboration with corporates including TATA Motors, Yamaha Motors, Godrej Home Appliances, Fronius India, Yaskawa to name a few. We aim at getting our trainees ready to compete in the industrial environment. The syllabus of all the concerned courses is set up in consultation with the industrial experts. After the training, the trainees are then absorbed by the companies," informed Fr. Aseethuparambil.

Similarly, Fronius India is also consistently working with various IITs, NITs, Government and Private Engineering Institutes. "We understand the fact that manufacturing cannot be solely taught in the classroom. Academic curriculum has not kept pace with the growing complexity of the industry. Research outcomes of educational institutions are typically presented to the scientific community without any participation from the industry. Hence, a common platform is needed for both the entities to understand each other's requirements and work towards fulfilling them to reach the common goal," noted Kamath.

Source: Little Flower Engineering Institute

Fronius India's Robotic Welding Center at LFEI campus.

For the students to become skilled welding technicians, Fronius India's Center trains them for specific welding applications including MIG/MAG,CMT welding, wire arc additive manufacturing etc., and for developing and programming new robotic welding processes.