

Best Practices

Practice 1

1. Title of the Practice

Outreach programs to promote inclusiveness

2. Objectives of the Practice

The primary purpose is to inculcate the values of civic responsibilities in the students by working and supporting the marginalized and deprived sections of our society. The main objectives were as follows

1. Providing services/products to the underprivileged
2. Outreach to increase awareness about relevant issues in the community
3. Outreach to enhance skills in the community
4. Developing beneficial networks through Outreach Programmes to reduce disparities
6. Promoting civic engagement in students

3. The Context

What were the contextual features or challenging issues that needed to be addressed in designing and implementing this practice (in about 150 words)?

The college is located in Trans Yamuna of East Delhi where both the rich and the poor reside in close proximity. A need was soon felt that students should be responsible members of the society and should work on community outreach projects that aim to reduce the gaps between the mainstream and the marginalized sections of our society. The Staff Council had acknowledged the need for engaging our students in community and extension activities and with this intent the 'Social Outreach Committee' was formed in 2018. Project 'HUM' focussed primarily in the area of education but later we also addressed other important issues as well such as environment, and women empowerment etc. Later on, NSS, COVID task force and Vidya Vistar Committee also became actively involved in carrying out extension and outreach programs. The main challenge was the pandemic due to which all activities had to become online.

4. The Practice

Describe the practice and its uniqueness in the context of India higher education.
What were the constraints / limitations, if any, faced (in about 400 words)?

When carrying out the practice of outreach it was important to develop a system where such community work becomes a part of their student life. The entire initiative was institutionalized from association with an NGO, training of members, linkages with RWA, and important members of the colony, as well as recording of daily attendance.

Providing education for the underprivileged

The slums in JhilMil colony were selected for the daily educational camps as this area was near to the college. Since March 2020 they are being held online due to pandemic. The practice developed as follows:

- Developing awareness for outreach activities in students through notices, posters, meeting and orientation programs.
- Developing adequate skills in students through training program so that they could be better able to work with community members.
- ECA slot in Time Table: Time Table committee ensured that in the ECA slot no lectures were taken and so students could go to the field for extension activities.
- Knowing the area: Walks, Door to door programs, Nukkad Natak, Daan Utsav', and Health Mela in the JhilMil colony were organized
- Developing Linkages with society: We developed a long-term collaboration with two organizations. The first was with an NGO - Slum Swaraj Foundation (education) and second was with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DLSA) which provides free legal services to weaker sections of the society. Gradually more linkages were formed
- Preparing a self-sustaining system for outreach activities such as educational camps: We decided to start educational camps in the Rajiv Camp of Jhilmil colony where student volunteers taught a group of small students on a specific day of the week. Assignments are given, PTMs are held, festivals and important days are celebrated, and all attendance are maintained. Since March 2020 initiative is online. Online mentoring includes teaching, moral support, educational guidance, social etc. via mobile.

Expansion of outreach initiatives

- Legal awareness: Once we gained entry in the area, another group of student volunteers now focused on legal awareness and SOCDC collaborated with DLSA. Aadhar cards were made in JhilMil colony on the basis of the data collected by students. DLSA Add On was started for college students to increase their legal literacy.
- Forming New Committees: Vidya Vistar committee has collaborated with Government Model College, Assam. The COVID -19 task force developed advisories, facilitated on-campus RTPCR Covid 19 testing facility, organized webinars. The existing NSS intensified its efforts on conducting awareness programmes.

5. Evidence of Success

Provide evidence of success such as performance against targets and benchmarks, review/results. What do these results indicate? Describe in about 200 words.

Many of the outreach activities were focused on educational camps for slum children whereas others were intended for community improvement with a focus on environment, health, and legal awareness. Feedback from the children living in Slums and PTMs has been very positive. Some children being taught by the college students have shown exceptional results. Jhilmil colony people are now more welcoming of the students and discuss their problems more freely. Our initiatives have also been covered in newspapers. Other awareness programs have also had good attendance and the COVID pandemic has not stopped these efforts.

Students of the college are not only givers but through the community activities they also reap benefits as engagement in such activities leads to academic and

personal development. More and more students are getting aware about the outreach activities.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Please identify the problems encountered and resources required to implement the practice (in about 150 words).

The main problem was the pandemic due to which the entire outreach activity was turned to online mode. It was also considered important to make everyone aware of the pandemic and then focus on other programs. Both NSS and Covid taskforce were engaged in carrying out several such awareness programs. As teaching became online for slum children, it was realized that many children in slums do not have mobiles/ computers/network required for online teaching. For this teaching was done in smaller groups as per convenience of the students depending when they could borrow mobiles from other family members. When we had awareness programs for the women from slums they were very shy to speak in the online forum and did not speak in front of everyone. More students are now being engaged in these activities so that more funds or used mobiles/computers can be distributed amongst the children of slums. More funds are needed and for this donation drives are being organized in the college and they are then distributed in nearby slums.

7. Notes (Optional)

Please add any other information that may be relevant for adopting/ implementing the Best Practice in other Institutions (in about 150 words).

Any other information regarding Institutional Values and Best Practices which the university would like to include.

Practice 2

1. Title of the Practice

Online learning and COVID preparedness

2. Objectives of the Practice

What are the objectives / intended outcomes of this “best practice” and what are the underlying principles or concepts of this practice (in about 100 words)?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the college had to make the difficult decision to close and conduct all activities online. However, later during the year at least some activities became in the physical mode. Moreover, the year was marked by lots of uncertainties and accordingly a new practice had to emerge to adapt to this new world. The objectives of this practice were threefold:

- 1). To ensure that the teaching learning practice goes on effectively in an online world during the pandemic by responding quickly and appropriately
- 2) To gradually reopen the institution as per GoI guidelines so that at least some teaching takes place in the physical face to face mode
- 3) To ensure COVID appropriate behaviours as well encourage prosocial behaviours in all

3. The Context

What were the contextual features or challenging issues that needed to be addressed in designing and implementing this practice (in about 150 words)?

There was an urgent need to rethink education as regular teaching was disrupted and the majority of the teaching learning process became online. Teachers have been forced to rethink their teaching pedagogies to accommodate online learning. Doing practical work in an online mode has been one of the most difficult obstacles. Other activities, such as internships, seminars, and field work, had to be moved online as well. Admissions and administration also became online. All these changes necessitated the acquisition of new skills in order to adapt to the changing environment. The impact on women's education was massive as many women students struggled to manage their studies with academics. Everyone has struggled with the loss of personal interaction. Research suggests that anxiety, despair, and stress have become frequent among students and employees. The college had to build the necessary infrastructure to support the online modality. The college also had to think about how to reopen at least some educational activities while ensuring that COVID appropriate protocols are followed.

4. The Practice

Describe the practice and its uniqueness in the context of India higher education.

- Upgrading ICT: The entire college was made Wifi accessible with a bandwidth > 50 MBPS and all faculty were provided institutional email ids, Google classroom and Zoom were extensively used to conduct online lectures, share resources and conduct internal exams and assignments.
- Training for ICT skills: Since the technology is new for several teachers therefore several webinars as well as FDP were organized.
- Developing innovative teaching pedagogies appropriate to online mode: Pedagogy was mainly participative with a focus on students engaging in group projects and giving powerpoint presentations, as well as discussions and other activities. Besides online lectures, teachers used Powerpoint presentations, lecture recordings, uploading on google drive, and Audio/video aids. Google Forms were used for taking feedback, research-based activities, maintaining attendance etc. All webinars, FDPs, workshops, DU exams, outreach programmes, heritage walk, pledge sessions have been virtual and conducted through ICT. Research by teachers focused on understanding the social context of the pandemic.
- Enhancing communication during lockdown: All students, faculty and other staff were in constant contact with each other through various means such as whatsapp, emails etc. Faculty groups and student groups were created and university/college communications were immediately posted on website/ student groups/ faculty groups through WhatsApp and email. At times a small support group was created online for helping a critical member.
- Developing tools for assessment: For online assignments online, it was important to develop assess the originality of content. One of the tools used was the plagiarism software Urkund which became available in the college library.
- Availability of Online library Resources: E-library resources became available as the College library had IP access as well as remote access to e-resources of DULS, Membership of Braille library of DULS and N-List was also renewed.

- Ensuring awareness about pandemic: The Covid Task Force of college developed advisories, facilitated on-campus RTPCR Covid 19 testing facility, and organized webinars.
- Focussing on Outreach activities: Anti Covid Task Force was created by 7 NSS units of different colleges of university of Delhi and our NSS unit was also a part of it. NSS worked on different areas to help people like plasma requirement, oxygen department, hospital beds and ventilators, food and security etc. The social outreach committee launched “saarhi” for educational support to slum children, and also distributed free ration to the needy while NSS intensified its outreach activities. Vidya Vistar committee has collaborated successfully with Government Model College, Assam.
- Planning for reopening the college for partial activities: Planning involved COVID advisories, COVID awareness activities, arrangements for sanitization, staggered timings, following COVID appropriate behaviours, following all safety mandates and upgrading Wifi.

5. Evidence of Success

Provide evidence of success such as performance against targets and benchmarks, review/results. What do these results indicate? Describe in about 200 words.

Although the face-to-face interaction of physical classes cannot be replicated in the online approach, the college's response to the pandemic was appropriate given the circumstances. The following examples show how the college acted quickly and effectively:

1. In March 2020 itself all classes and other activities such as webinars and exams became online
2. The feedback survey and satisfaction survey taken during the pandemic year indicated that students were quite satisfied with the online mode
3. The examination results of the students during the above period indicates that students on the whole performed quite well

This experience has implications for future preparedness of the college under similar circumstances if these were to arise again:

1. To ensure that ICT tools are upgraded from time to time and teachers and others stakeholders are trained in them
2. Innovative teaching pedagogies alongside lecture methods are important
3. Inequities in education needs to be reduced by providing financial and other support
4. College should take up the responsibility of creating awareness about COVID-19
5. Counseling and other support during such times is essential for the mental health of everyone

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Please identify the problems encountered and resources required to implement the practice (in about 150 words).

While many women students were resilient and gained from these new pedagogies there were others especially those from weaker backgrounds who struggled. COVID forced many of our women students to take up the additional burden of household responsibilities. In certain cases they had to work to support their families. At times, girls took care of sick members of the families and their younger siblings. As students and

faculty experienced stress and anxiety, it became vital to provide counseling services. Several webinars/activities were also conducted for coping during these difficult times. The college realized that students coming from weaker sections of the society did not have access to laptops and students (and faculty) could issue laptops from college. Flexibility in assignments schedules further helped students who struggled with internet connections. As per DU guidelines fees was reduced.