

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practice – I

Title of the Practice : Moral and Ethical Education of the Students

1. Goal

Our actual mission is not only to give subject-based knowledge but to shape the students as noble individuals and better citizens. Keeping this in view, providing quality education that involves overall development is the major focus of the institution. No doubt this institution provides time relevant knowledge, but life-nurturing values have also not been ignored.

The college recognizes the importance of imparting wholesome education as will transform the youth into mentally enlightened, morally upright and enterprising individuals who will have the confidence and skills to follow the right path and to hold their head high in society. This can be possible through right thinking which springs from right learning and which translates into right action.

2. The Context

It has been increasingly felt that in the hurry to accumulate knowledge, students drift away from life-sustaining values and give themselves up to dejection and frustration whenever their high, and sometimes unreasonable, expectations are not met. Dealing with boys and girls collectively and keeping under check the gender factor can in itself be quite challenging, especially when 75% of the students come from a background where restrictions are many and awareness is entirely lacking. Moreover, certain alarming tendencies have been found prevalent among the students such as dependence upon drugs and excessive indulgence in modern electronic devices. All these factors erode the value system while distracting and diverting them from the path of knowledge.

Hence, the need to remind the students of such values as self-restraint, compassion, integrity, honour, responsibility, respect and fairness. Students need to understand that the secret of success consists not only in developing skills to become more employable but in developing a balanced personality that can undergo trials and tribulations with equanimity while serving the humanity in one's individual capacity.

3. The Practice

Education, in totality, should cultivate right value system. Our college is in the vicinity of Sri Anandpur Sahib, a holy city renowned for being the birth place of the Khalsa. The college has been established to commemorate the supreme sacrifice made by the Ninth Guru, Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib, for religious freedom and human rights. These facts put

all the onus on us to nurture noble traditions and value system. The college is, therefore, devoted to impart moral and ethical education to the students to make them useful citizens. Education changes and modifies our behavior; moral and ethical education ennoble our conduct. Our vision – "Shubh Karman te Kabhun Na Taron" – also emphasizes virtuous conduct.

Our students celebrate 'Sangrand', the monthly religious congregation wherein some scholar of repute is invited to enlighten the students about sterling moral values. Every month one period is kept aside for this when students and staff gather in the college 'Gurudwara Sahib' and join in the prayers. Hymns are recited followed by the Principal's address about right living and high thinking.

Students are encouraged to write 'Thought of the Day' on a strategically placed notice board. Each day up to five sentences of wisdom are displayed on the notice board. In addition to this, the same thoughts are also displayed on the Digital board of the college.

The entire faculty uses tutorial classes to inform the students about the value of decent behaviour, peaceful co-existence and respect for authority.

The college has Religious Studies as one of the subject options for undergraduate classes. It was started about 18 years ago because of its strong moral and ethical underpinning.

Girl students of all the undergraduate courses are collectively addressed by the senior female faculty in the beginning of the session. They are informed of the measures that they can take to avoid any situation that might result in eve-teasing. For example, they are told about the necessity to follow decent dress code and practise appropriate demeanour suitable for co-ed institution. This interaction raises their level of awareness and instils confidence in them.

Special programmes are organized and scholars are invited to interact with the students at large about the issues that concern their general behaviour and overall personality.

Although the college makes lots of efforts to involve all the students in its drive to include moral and ethical education in its academic structure, we do come across hostile and escapist attitude on the part of a section of boys. Shortage of time is another constraint that we face in the implementation of this worthy practice. The syllabus compulsions and the demands of academic calendar do not allow as much time as we would like to devote to this noble aspect.

4. Evidence of Success

Stress on moral and ethical education has created congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning. As a result there has hardly ever been any student strike or any serious incident of indiscipline. This has instilled trust and confidence in the hearts of the parents regarding the

optimum working of the college. Sharp increase in the strength of the students is an ample evidence to this fact. Due to self-cultivated sense of responsibility and discipline, there has never been any incident of vandalism or tempering with the college infrastructure which is a common occurrence in colleges. Students show self-restraint in the use of college computers, internet facility and other gadgets. The instances of eve-teasing are almost negligible in the college campus. No case of ragging has ever been reported.

There is greater participation in sports and other extracurricular activities. Attendance in classes and in the college library has considerably increased. Noble traditions and judicious counselling by the teachers have gone a long way to inculcate positive and helpful attitude among the students. Many students donate their costly text books to the departmental libraries after they clear their exams. This generous attitude reveals their intrinsic virtue and social consciousness. Our students also organize several functions and excursions themselves. It generates a sense of responsibility, humility and co-operation required for useful citizens.

5. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

As stated earlier, we do come across some problems in the implementation of this noble practice. Some students project indifference to the programmes meant for moral and ethical education. This is more true of a section of boys. For instance, not all of them would be part of the congregation during monthly prayers which are normally held in and around the Gurudwara premises. Likewise, some of them would choose to lurk around in the college grounds when some specially organized programme is taking place in the college auditorium. The compulsions of time-table schedule and syllabus completion also act as constraints in implementing this practice more strenuously. Another limitation regarding its implementation is the dearth of space in the college hall, which makes it impossible to accommodate the entire student strength at one go for such educative programmes.

As far as the resources required are concerned, the implementation of this practice requires only the mobilization of human resources. Student's involvement and teacher's inclination and persuasion are of prime importance in making this practice a meaningfully significant activity.

6. Notes

We would like to point out that in implementing this practice the purpose is not to push students towards any religious ideology but to make them better human beings. The Sikh students are encouraged to follow the tenets of Sikhism, but students from other faiths are guided to be true to their religious beliefs. The college entirely subscribes to secularist mode

of thinking irrespective of the fact that it is associated with a religiously significant place and managed by a premier Sikh religious body.

Best Practice – II

Title of the Practice : Community Service

1. Goal

We believe that service is the very purpose of life. If knowledge is power, community is strength and the will to do good is everything. Community service provides an opportunity to apply academic learning to real human needs and to make the knowledge gained usable and useful. The college feels that it has a responsibility to instil in young people the value of giving back to their community. In adopting community service as one of the core practices, the purpose has been to involve more and more students in socially meaningful activities. The idea has been to encourage volunteerism and to foster social consciousness about the needs of community.

2. The Context

In today's society, the people are busy and engrossed in themselves, so to help our young people experience community service as part of their education provides them with the chance to give back to the community that helped to raise them. Community service harnesses that tremendous youthful energy and unleashes it on causes students care for.

The college firmly believes that education should not only prepare students for their profession, but it should prepare them for their role as a societal being. Initially students participated in community service through the activities of NSS and NCC. The visible positive change that it brought to their performance and attitude made us think of adopting community service as one of the main activities.

Community service inspires the students to step outside their egocentric world and help others. It helps them in realizing their educational, social and developmental goals.

3. The Practice

Service and sacrifice for the sake of humanity is the message that marks the climatic point in the life of the Prophet (the Ninth Guru) whose good name the college partakes of. The college motto also states : "May I never refrain from righteous deeds." True to its tradition the institution has been a perennial source of encouragement to selfless social service through its various voluntary organizations.

Community service as a part of education means working for personal growth by blending interpersonal skills with civic engagement. It is the best way to inculcate a sense of

responsibility in individuals. By participating in community service, students are introduced to good values and morals. Values such as humility, gratefulness, honesty, sincerity and respect are the important virtues that one can acquire from helping the community.

The college community service centre has been named after Bhai Ghanayia Ji, the dedicated disciple of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who served wounded soldiers of both sides in the battlefield. This centre acts as a liaison between students, faculty, staff, and community organizations of the area. It works in tandem with the college NSS and NCC units which are always in the vanguard of community services.

The college has adopted some villages for various services. For the past several years, the students have volunteered to perform village cleanups village paths are levelled and pot-holes are filled up particularly after the rainy season. Village pastures are cleared up of plastic and synthetic waste. A few months earlier students carried out 'Adult Literacy' drive in one of the adopted villages. The volunteers from our Agriculture Department help farmers in plantation making them aware of the suitable varieties of crops and modern methods of farming.

While deciding about the campaigns the interests of the volunteers are taken into consideration. The teachers first have a conversation with small groups of students, generally in tutorial classes, to understand the causes they care about. Students often plan awareness marches in the city to enlighten the public against social evils, such as dowry deaths, female foeticide, drug addiction, communalism etc. Supported by college cultural society, volunteers stage street plays and skits in villages to generate awareness about burning issues.

Sri Anandpur Sahib, by virtue of its holy and historical status, is the venue for several fairs and festivals. Our student volunteers perform commendable service by assisting various NGOs in running First-Aid booths, regulating traffic, arranging drinking water and in guiding the tourists and pilgrims. Our volunteers serve in community kitchen set up for the pilgrims with great dedication. In addition, our college volunteers conduct cleanliness campaigns in and around the city, take part in blood donation camps and shoulder responsibility during national calamities.

It has been noticed that community service provides students with the motivation necessary to put forth effort in academics. It generates positive feelings among the students. Timetable constraints and academic schedule deadlines are the main limitations in the full-throated implementation of this activity.

4. Evidence of Success

These simple initiatives made a big impact and allowed students to see they can be a part of something empowering. For example, so many students volunteered themselves for helping old people and children cross road safely near schools and hospitals that we had to face difficulty in selecting a manageable group from among them.

Under the able guidance and persuasion of Bhai Ghanayia Ji Community Service Centre, liberal contributions were made to help the victims of natural disasters in Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir. Students collected warm clothes, blankets and water bottles to help the affected people.

Many students care deeply about the threats facing our environment and show so much interest in helping their community “go green” that they pool in money to buy saplings in bulk from the nurseries.

The students involved in adult literacy drive and helping the aged around found the whole activity so satisfying and enlivening that they decided to celebrate New Year with the aged of their village.

By participating in service projects, students forge bonds with each other, as well as other members of the community. These bonds enhance their interpersonal skills and increase their social network.

5. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Generally the students are quite enthusiastic about community service activities except when the exams are close at hand, for mostly holidays or special days are used for such activities. Students from science and professional streams are hard pressed to spare any time particularly due to semester system of examination. They often hesitate to participate in those community service camps which are held away from the college or encroach upon their tuition schedule. Certain service activities require special kind of ‘kits’ which became a little difficult to procure in sufficient number from the concerned departments. Mostly the college uses its own resources to provide required implements or equipment etc. Some students also make small but meaningful contributions.

6. Notes

Very soon, we are planning to devise a mandatory policy requiring students to complete certain hours of community service during graduation. We feel that it is essential to enhance social connectedness that appears to be waning in our increasingly segmented society.
