CRITERIA - VII

INNOVATIONS
AND
BEST PRACTICES

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7.1 Environment Consciousness

7.1.1. Does the institute conduct a Green Audit of its campus and facilities?

The institute is always conscious about energy conservation and follows measures to reduce wasteful energy consumption. Energy audit has been conducted and energy efficient electrical appliances have been installed.

7.1.2. What are the initiatives taken by the college to make the campus eco-friendly?

Various measures are taken to reduce, recycle and reuse solid waste to make our campus eco-friendly. In the orientation program students are informed and instructed about measures to save energy in the lecture rooms and college premises. All the stakeholders are motivated and oriented to save energy and water. NSS volunteers and members of Green Thumb Club are assigned the task of monitoring and reinforcing energy saving behaviors / habits.

a. **Energy Saving and Conservation**
   b. LED lights have been installed in places where energy consumption is high.
   c. Master switches have been installed in all the classrooms and floors and they are labeled so that, only those required can be switched on.
   d. The staff and students switch off the fans and lights when not required. All the air conditioners are maintained at or above 24 degree Celsius temperature.
   e. A project titled "Save Energy" has been undertaken in collaboration with TATA Power (CLUB ENERGY). The aim of this project is to create awareness regarding energy conservation. Students' orientation program is conducted by Tata Power to explain the measures to save energy

b. **Water Harvesting**
   - Rain (Roof) water harvesting system has been installed wherein rain water is channeled to the existing underground well and the same is used for flushing purposes in some of the toilets in the college.
   - In the adopted village NSS volunteers have worked on rain water harvesting in the houses and soak pits have been made.

c. **Efforts for Carbon neutrality**
   - We practice simple measures like using two sides of paper for printing, using waste paper for rough work, using the lights/fans only when needed, switching off lights in unused rooms etc.
   - In the library, scanned copies of question papers are kept instead of hard copies.
   - A successful "Zero Waste" project has helped us to reduce our carbon footprint.

d. Plantation

- Efforts are made to protect existing plant and trees in and around the campus. Since we have space constraints at the campus we have limited plants; but with sustained efforts we have been planting trees in our adopted villages of Mhaskal, Adivali, Susarwadi, Dahivali, Bangarwadi, Masrundi, Mamnoli and Ane. The trees are being well maintained jointly by villagers and college.
- Special guest lectures are conducted with the objective of making students aware about role of green plants in reducing environmental pollution and maintaining ecological balance.
- We have nurtured a tradition to felicitate guests by giving a sapling to promote environmental consciousness.
- An organic farming project "Phulva Parasbag Anganat" is undertaken in our adopted village, Ane.

e. Waste management

- A project on Waste Management has been undertaken in collaboration with "*Stree Mukti Sanghathana*".
- A separate area named **Waste Management Zone** has been created in the campus.
    i. Dry and wet waste are segregated.
    ii. The wet waste is taken to the compost pit for converting into organic manure. The organic manure is used in campus for plants.
    iii. Dry waste is collected by *Stree Mukti Sanghathana and* recycled papers worth 60% of its value are supplied.
- E–waste disposal has been out sourced.

7.2 Innovations

7.2.1 Give details of innovations introduced during the last four years which have created a positive impact on the functioning of the college.

- **Increased use of modern ICT-assisted teaching-learning methods:** Necessary infrastructure including smart boards and LCD projectors, wi-fi facilities, e-resources have been enhanced / created to use ICT facilities optimally. Teachers have also been trained in the use of technology which has resulted in better teaching-learning. There are provisions for online submission and assessment of projects.

- **Mentoring:** One faculty member is assigned as a mentor to a group of 25 to 50 students. Monthly meetings are held to facilitate student support, academic guidance and to help to deal with personal or emotional problems. Extreme cases are referred to the counseling centre. The students are also encouraged to contact the mentor in case of need. This has had a positive impact on the teacher-student relationship and has improved self-efficacy of the students.

- **Comprehensive Village Development Programme:** Villages are adopted for a period of one to three years where complete village development programme is undertaken. During NSS special camps, shramadaan by volunteers is done for activities like surfacing of the road, construction of toilets, setting up a pipe-line to supply water from the river to the village, rain-water harvesting, soak pit making, etc. Activities like tree plantation, literacy awareness drives, cleanliness drives etc. are conducted throughout the year. NSS volunteers who participate in these programmes are sensitized to the needs of the rural communities and arouse in them a desire to serve the society.

- **Online Feedback Mechanism:** Students' feedback is collected through online feedback mechanism which works on LAN. Data is analyzed through IMS and reports are generated.

- **Waste Management System:** Waste Management has been undertaken in collaboration with Stree Mukti Sanghathana. Wet waste is converted into organic manure in compost pit. Stree Mukti Sanghathana supplies recycled papers in lieu of dry waste.

- **Virtual library page:** An index page is created by library which gives links to in-house and external sources of information. This page is available to staff and students through LAN.

- **Preparation of Policy booklet:** Policy booklet giving standardized guidelines for smooth functioning of various committees has been prepared. It helps committee members to understand their roles and responsibilities clearly.

7.3 Best Practices

7.3.1: Preparing and using framework for Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA)

1. Title of the Practice

Preparing and using framework for Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA)

2. Goal
To systematically compile and objectively assess individual and departmental inputs aimed towards institutional improvement and quality sustenance.

3. The Context
Upgrading academic and administrative processes is a continuous endeavor for the institution. The changing education scenario mandates:
- Self and external evaluation and sustenance initiatives for maintaining quality

- Stimulating academic environment for promotion of quality in teaching, learning and research
- Inculcating accountability in staff members for assuring quality of their teaching, research and services.

Through brainstorming in IQAC meetings, it was felt that AAA will help us to understand the present status of various institutional processes and identify the gaps. This will guide and direct us to take necessary steps / start new initiatives. It was found that we lacked standardized formats for periodic assessment of academic and administrative units. The sub-committees of IQAC made the formats for both, academic and administrative audit to ascertain the presence and adequacy of quality assurance procedures, their applicability and effectiveness in guaranteeing quality of inputs and processes. and effectiveness in guaranteeing quality of inputs and processes.

4. The Practice

Step One: Preparation of proforma and criteria for assessment

a. Preparation of proforma:
Terms of reference given to the sub-committee to prepare a standardized format were:
- Define the focus areas in academic and administrative processes
- Identify the procedures used by departments in each of the these areas

A detailed proforma of 25 pages was prepared which included department profile, students' profile, workload, research details and teaching and evaluation processes.

Information regarding Teaching Process included the following:
- Teachers' orientation to handle curriculum
- Planning of curriculum transaction
- Efforts made to develop and improve their academic / professional competency
- Academic calendar for internal and external exam schedule and co-curricular activity
- Teaching methods / ICT / teaching aids used
- Mechanisms used to keep pace with recent developments
- Student feedback evaluation system

Details of evaluation process included the following:
- Methods adopted by teachers
- Objectivity / Effectiveness of evaluation system
- Mechanism adopted to communicate progress of students to parents, addressing evaluation related grievances
- Analysis of student's results

The proforma also has provision for assessment of teachers by vice principal, principal and management as applicable for qualification, punctuality, regularity, accountability etc.

Proforma for Administrative departments includes information related to different sections handling admissions, examinations, stores, maintenance, accounts, salary, appointments, promotions, administration, and scholarships. Library and laboratories audit proforma included details of timings, various facilities / services provided and administration, etc.

b. Finalizing the criteria for analysis

A total score of 100 is divided between five criteria as given below. Weightages are assigned to key indicators in each criterion to have an objective audit.

Criteria	Marks
Departmental Vision and Mission	**05**
Understanding students	**20**
Efforts made to understand barriers of learning of students	12
Efforts made to overcome the above barriers	06
Mechanism followed for differently-abled students	02
Teaching- Learning	**40**
Teaching- Learning Process	15
Percentage use of lecture method for teaching.	07
Number of other teaching methods used.	05
Number of teaching aids used	03
ICT-assisted teaching	05
Mechanism used for recent developments in subjects	05
Evaluation and Results	**20**
Evaluation methods adopted	05
Average total results of last three years	15
Teacher quality	**15**
Qualifications acquired by teachers in the last three years	03
Average API score of teachers for last three years	12
Total Score	**100**

Step Two: Data Collection

Staff members were informed about the need for the audit and the proforma to be used for the same. They were expected to submit the duly filled in proforma to respective heads of the departments within stipulated time period.

Step Three: Evaluation

Internal audit team consisting of three senior faculty members evaluated the departments on the basis of inputs given. The team made appropriate recommendations for continuous improvement of the processes and procedures used for quality assurance and enhancement. External audit will be done in the near future.

5. Evidence of Success:

The exercise of undergoing AAA has resulted in critical, objective and introspective assessment of present status of the departments and areas that need improvement. It has created a stimulating environment, enthusing the staff to engage in quality academic pursuits. Sharing of information between the departments has generated awareness regarding the plethora of effective teaching methods and variety of activities that can be conducted. Data compilation for the audit brought in systematic documentation by the staff members. The objective and realistic recommendations were well accepted by both academic and administrative staff and there is eagerness to comply with the same. This endeavor which started with skepticism concluded with the staff feeling satisfied and ready to accept the evaluation positively.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

There was initial resistance from staff as they felt that the exercise was futile and time-consuming. The proforma was lengthy and took longer time for data collection and compilation. To address those problems the dates for submission were extended.

7.3.2 Welfare activities to support underprivileged students to pursue higher education

1. Title of the practice

Welfare Activities to support underprivileged students to pursue higher education

2. Goal

Though there has been a phenomenal growth in the number of women enrolled in higher education since independence, the percentage of women students

from under privileged background is much lower due to gender discrimination and financial constraints. Financial assistance needs to be provided to these students to enable them to complete higher education as once educated; these women can become a channel for improving the quality of life both at home and outside. By encouraging and promoting education of women, they can be empowered for a better future.

3. The Context

Majority of our students are from socio-economically challenged segments of the society. Personal interactions with students and analysis of the dropout statistics has revealed that familial and financial constraints prevent them from completing higher education and lead them to drop-out midway through the course. It was observed that supporting them with financial assistance would help them to pursue higher education. Hence, it was decided to generate funds to provide financial help in the form of scholarships, micro loans, etc. Besides financial assistance, students also need other basic necessities like meals, medical assistance etc. To meet the needs of the students, a number of schemes have been started.

4. The Practice

Our management believes in inclusive education and strives hard to raise funds from philanthropists to make these schemes sustainable. The schemes launched are as follows:

- **Financial assistance through interest-free micro loans and scholarships:**
  Under this scheme, needy students receive interest-free loans to pursue higher education or to complete professional courses at our institute or at other institutes. As the fees of such courses are high, the needy students take loans and repay them at the earliest. Scholarships are awarded to students who are unable to pay the fees.
- **Mini meals:**
  Many of our students cannot afford two meals a day. They attend classes on an empty stomach and report to their jobs directly from college. We have launched the Mini Meal programme, where 200 needy students are given a balanced meal including a fruit on every working day. This programme has resulted in better health and improved academic performance of the beneficiaries.
- **Medical Aid:**
  Under this scheme, students are provided free medical consultation and medicines. Students with major medical problems are provided with financial assistance for hospitalization and treatment. For this, the management has launched the Medical Aid Fund by setting up a corpus of ` 10,00,000 (` Ten Lakhs)
- **Financial support to gifted students:**
  The college has set up a corpus of ` 10, 00,000 to enable gifted students to hone their special talents in academics, sports or creative activities like dramatics, dance, music, drawing etc. by assisting them financially to take professional training and excel in their field.

5. Evidence of success

- Around hundred students avail the micro loan facility per year and the repayment rate is very good. Most of the students who have completed their courses are now well placed in life and their standard of living has improved.
- The beneficiaries of the scholarships have been able to complete their education successfully.
- With mini-meals it has been observed that the attendance and academic performance of the students have improved.

6. Problems encountered

- Raising funds to sustain these programmes is difficult. The Trust works very hard in raising resources.
- Getting efficient man power to work in this area on a voluntary basis or working at nominal pay is another challenge. Taking help of past and current students has helped us to save on administrative costs.
- Convincing financially weak but desirous students to utilize financial assistance in the form of loan for pursuing professional courses is a challenge.