

Best Practices 2019-20

Environmental Sensitivity

Objectives:

1. Creating environmental awareness.
2. Conserving natural resources, environment.
3. Promoting clean, green environment.
4. Making the public conscious about dangers to the environment.

The Context:

With growing awareness of the dangers that development is posing to the environment, the only way forward is, a collective responsibility towards and ownership of the environment. The need to initiate action for the protection of our immediate environment is perceived as urgent. Unless this awareness comes in the formative years and when people are still young, chances are, it never will.

The Practice: The Government's mandate that all students will study EVS as a compulsory/qualifying paper is implemented in letter and spirit. To convert this bookish knowledge of issues pertaining to environment into behavioral practice, the college encourages and inspires students to participate in multiple activities throughout the year that foster in them, the sensitivity that is critically required. These activities are undertaken under the aegis of NSS, NCC, Rovers and Rangers and Eco Club. Students have been participating in tree-plantation drives in collaboration with the Department of Forests, Himachal Pradesh. They have been planting trees/plants around the campus to enhance the green cover. The camps organized by the NSS encourage students to assist villagers in cleaning up their surroundings of non-degradable waste like polythene and plastic. They get to learn much from this collaborative effort from the villagers and their indigenous understanding of nature. Similar activities are undertaken from time to time by the NCC, Eco Club and Rovers/Rangers.

Initiatives like energy conservation, use of renewable resources, water harvesting, garbage disposal, use of solar water heating and solar power generation have been taken up by the college. Students attend lectures/seminars on environmental awareness. Students are encouraged to walk to college or use the bicycle instead of driving to college. The campus being located on one of the restricted roads of the town helps us limit the inflow of vehicular traffic. We plan to activate our solar heating system in the hostel soon. The rain water is harvested in tanks and the water thus collected is utilized for non-drinking purposes.

Evidence of success: The college campus and areas beyond have benefitted from our plantation activity. Lectures/seminars have motivated students to keep the area green/clean. Our attempts to preserve energy and water are showing small but encouraging results. There is visible awareness amongst students regarding the appropriate disposal of waste. They do not litter the campus and they invariably throw garbage in segregated garbage bins.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Shimla is a city on a hill top with little area and scope to expand or to accommodate the needs of its growing population. Most people seem to be aware of the concerns theoretically, but when environmentally sensitive action requires them to surrender a part of their convenience, all Philosophy becomes only that...empty words that sound good. Small steps by college students fail to meet true appreciation.

Disaster Preparedness

Objectives

1. Generating an understanding of disaster
2. Training in response, recovery and mitigation
3. Co-ordination and implementation of plans during emergencies
4. Spreading this awareness beyond the campus

Context: The state of Himachal Pradesh lies in a seismic zone that makes it vulnerable to earthquake-generated crises. Owing to its hilly terrain, we frequently face accidents resulting from landslides, cloud-bursts and road hazards. Since we use heating devices and fire in the winters, our buildings, which incidentally have large a quantum of wood, are prone to fire-accidents. Life and property that is lost in such episodes can be reduced with disaster-appropriate response mechanisms and preparedness.

Practice: The Disaster Management Cell organizes various activities like drills, seminars and demonstrations on earthquakes, fire and landslides awareness. The Cell also trains its members and others to deal with the psychological impact of disasters. Various programmes/workshops are organized to train faculty members, students on disaster preparedness/reduction/response. Members of the faculty are encouraged to attend the Refresher course on Disaster management conducted by the HRDC, HP University. The cell frequently conducts training sessions for students. One such training session was, a one day workshop, “Remembering the 4th April Kangra Earthquake”. Students were nominated to attend a sensitivity programme on “Psychological Care” organized by USAD, UNDP and MC Shimla.

Evidence of Success: WhatsApp portal named Sanjauli COVID Helpers, created after the onset of Covid, reached out to people in need of food items, medicines, masks, blood donation and simple information on healthy mental and physical well being. Its efforts were applauded by the local community and the administration. There has been enthusiastic participation in training sessions; both from the staff and the students.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Routine mock drills, compulsory disaster training for students and the general public needs to be introduced by the State Govt. Disaster

Management Cell more frequently. Practical hands-on training needs to be imparted in a manner that its becomes a behavioral response, rather than a passive reception of demonstrations and drills.