

Best Practice 1

Title of the Practice: 'Sujeevanam'

Objective of the practice

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or Swachh Bharat Mission was a nation-wide campaign in India initiated by our Hon'ble Prime Minister for the period between 2014 and 2019 that aimed at cleaning the streets, roads and infrastructure of Indian cities, smaller towns, and rural areas. In accordance with the Swachh Bharath Abhiyan, the institution also tried to keep the Campus spick and span. The Plan envisaged a periodical campus cleaning drive which was coordinated by the NSS Units under the supervision of the Programme Officer. It also aimed to transform society through conduct of awareness campaigns and focused action in the nearby villages.

Goals

- To make students aware of the real concerns of environment and its sustainability.
- To ensure the protection of the environment through effective waste management measures.
- To give awareness on products that avoid or minimize waste generation.
- To increase reuse and recycling rates of products.
- To increase public understanding and shape community. perceptions on the dangers of plastic pollution and available solutions, thereby empowering more people to act.
- To ensure that people are conscious of the impact of waste on their health, wellbeing, and the environment.

The college focused on the 3R initiative in waste management— the principle of reducing waste, reusing, and recycling resources and products. Reducing means choosing to use things with care to reduce the amount of waste generated. Reusing involves the repeated use of items or parts of items which still have usable aspects. Recycling means the use of waste itself as resources. Waste minimization can be achieved in an efficient way by focusing primarily on the first of the 3Rs viz. "reduce," followed by "reuse" and then "recycle." The college not only gave awareness to the students but also to the nearby villagers through the NSS volunteers. They implemented some practices also in this regard.

The context

Our country faces major environmental challenges associated with waste generation and inadequate waste collection, treatment, and disposal. Waste segregation at source and use of specialized waste processing facilities to separate recyclable materials has a key role.

In a society that values convenience, the current “throwaway” lifestyle encourages a linear approach to the production and disposal of products, rather than a circular approach that regards waste as simply another resource. Nowadays people lead busy lives and value convenience; as they go about their day rushing between activities, the purchase of single-use products is often the most convenient choice. The consequence of this convenience comes in the form of high quantities of waste. In an era where societies around the world are becoming more conscious of the issues surrounding waste, each one of us has some responsibility in this regard.

The Practice

The college adopted the waste management policy of “Generate Less Recycle More”. Waste is separated as biodegradable (organic wastes) and non-biodegradable (plastics etc) and segregated at source by providing separate dustbins. Dustbins of blue, green, and red colors have been used. Dustbins were arranged in all department staff rooms, labs, library, and near every flight of stairs. Cleaning and emptying the dustbins were done on a regular basis. The organic waste when decomposed by vermicompost was reused as organic compost for the plants in the College campus. Plastic waste was handed over to ‘haritha karma sena’ regularly. Green protocol is observed on the campus. Green protocol leaflets prepared by the students were displayed at many places on the campus.

Less Paper Office

Most of the office work is done digitally. Student attendance uploading, university registration for examination, admission procedure, E grants and scholarships are not completely paper free, but managed with less paper along with digital support. Moodle helps teachers to avoid use of paper for assignments and notes. Assignments and projects are usually evaluated online. For class tests, questions are compiled in smart phones by teachers to reduce consumption of paper. All the communications are made through electronic mode only. Single side-used papers are reused for writing and printing in all departments.

Pen Collection Drive

Aiming towards sustainable development, NSS volunteers collect all discarded plastic pens from the campus to be sent for recycling. In order to continue the collection process, they placed cardboard boxes in all classrooms. The final collection of used pens from all classes has been on every Friday evening. The collected pens are handed over to Haritha Karma Sena for recycling.

Avoidance of plastic

Earlier single use plastic cups and plates were used in the college during various functions. Having been aware of green protocols, college authorities purchased steel plates and glasses for serving food during the functions in the college. Students of the NSS unit began to use plantain and Vatta leaves for serving light refreshments. They were always motivated to keep their own plate, glass, and water bottle with them wherever they go. Students were advised to bring lunch in a durable or reusable lunchbox, especially steel lunch boxes and steel bottles. In this way a culture of reducing waste was instilled in the students. Plastic bottles were collected from the campus and handed over to Haritha Karma Sena for recycling.

Cleaning drives

On the campus, nearby village and town, a mass cleaning drive was performed on October 2, 'Gandhi Jayanthi'. At Adavi, eco tourism centre also a cleaning drive was conducted under the monitoring of the NSS volunteers. Every year students collect a huge amount of plastic waste from here and hand it over to the Haritha Karma Sena.

Awareness surveys on plastic disposal were conducted in various houses in the adopted colony and various parts of Konni Grama Panchayath to know about the waste management policies adopted by them. Awareness was provided on the sorting of waste materials, composting systems etc. Our student volunteers went to each home in the adopted colony and explained all these things in detail. They also distributed green protocol leaflets to them. Besides the adopted villages, these things were done in houses at various parts of Konni Grama Panchayath. Cloth bags prepared by Bhoomitra Sena with a logo of "plastic upayogam parimithappeduthoo, bhoomiye rakshikkoo" were also distributed to them.

Evidence of success

- Plastic consumption on the campus got minimized.
- Students and staff avoided plastic cups and disposable plates.
- Everyone is now using steel lunch boxes and water bottles.
- Plastic bottled water is used nowhere on the campus.

- Students are keeping their own plates, glasses and bottle with them during long journeys or camps.
- College has a large set of steel plate and glasses for serving food on special occasions.
- People in the adopted villages are aware of the harmful effects of waste on health and environment.
- They started adopting proper waste management systems

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Initially students were reluctant to leave the use and throw culture.

Villagers also showed such a reluctance to waste management policies in the beginning.

Plastic alternatives are usually more expensive and hence it requires some funding for initial purchase.

Constant evaluation is required in the case of villages and towns for which the students are not getting enough time due to their hectic academic schedule.

Best Practice 2

Title of the Practice: 'Santhwanam'

SAS College believes in the overall development of the students. The College pays special attention to inculcate values in the students at every opportunity. 'Snehasparsam', a unique endeavour of the College is an extension activity to reach out to the underprivileged and the marginalized.

Goals

To create a culture that infuses extension as a core ingredient of true education.

To foster inter-connectedness, civic consciousness, kinship and eco-justice among students.

To empower and improve the socio-economic conditions of the marginalized people.

It is a platform for providing hands-on experience to students in uplifting the local community and bringing about social change. It also provides learning experiences and opportunities for growth to students, helping them discover their inner strengths, developing innate worth and encouraging them to contribute to the needy, less privileged sections of society.

The context

The patients from financially poor families ailing from various diseases come to the Government General Hospital, Konni to undergo treatment. The patients suffer a lot from the diseases and do not even have money to buy the medicines. Medicines alone cannot completely cure a patient. They need proper and timely food. Due to lack of nutritious food, they fall ill. By identifying the problem of patients, we took up the initiative to give food to them once in a week in association with Blood Donors Kerala (BDK), Pathanamthitta Chapter, who arranges 'Snehasadya', an initiative to feed the needy in many hospitals in Kerala. The hospitals will not receive food from the public due to safety measures. So, in association with BDK, our college NSS team decided to supply meals to the patients and their bystanders on every Sunday. Besides this, the NSS volunteers always try to identify underprivileged people from the society and provide support for them also.

The Practice

"Visappurahitha Konni"

Students prepare and serve lunch (Kanji, payar, achar, pappadam) for the patients and their bystanders every Sunday. The college provides food for around 70 people in the hospital. They meet the expenses by finding sponsors or with their own pocket money. Most often, students avoid birthday celebrations, and that money is used for such a noble purpose. Teachers and other staff of the college also contribute during any special celebrations of their close relatives.

“Naipunyam” oru Kaithanginuvendi

The NSS unit is making lotion, soap, soap powder etc. during free time. Using the profit they earn, the students try to provide help to the needy people of the society. They identified an old woman above 70 years from the local ward who was leading a lonely life. She was not married and was earlier taking tuition classes for kids. Now, because of her old age related problems, she is not able to work. On women empowerment day, she was honored among others with ponnada and some financial aid and food provisions were also given to her. On the same occasion, students came to notice that she was living in a house without a door. So, the students took steps to raise fund through the program ‘Naipunyam’ in which they sold the handmade soap and lotions, and the profit was used to buy and fix a strong door for her house. Her house needed some maintenance work and that was also provided by the college NSS Unit.

“Sudarshanam”

Our NSS volunteers in association with the Department of Social Justice, help elderly people coming alone to visit Sabarimala. They accompany them to and fro, and if needed, carry them in trollies.

On the NSS day (2019) September 24, our college NSS unit visited Prathyaasha Bhavan, a nearby orphanage and provided food provisions. The orphanage has more than twenty people above 70 years old. The students also donated clothes and medicines to meet their needs.

“Snehasparsham”

Our NSS volunteers helped an old lady whose son had died in an accident. She had no other children and relatives for her help. They visited the lady at the end of every month and supplied her with food provisions and money.

Evidence of success

1. It solves the problem of poor patients, who come from faraway places of the district, suffering from various diseases. Patients do not need to depend on others, and they can recover speedily from ill-health
2. Underprivileged people get confidence and hope on their lives.
3. The students were taken outside classrooms and they got a different learning experience. It has made them more sensitive to the needs of society and it promoted a spirit of social commitment as evidenced from their feedback. The strong social orientation imparted to students was strongly revealed during the recent floods that ravaged Kerala.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

One of the greatest problems encountered is lack of sufficient time to conduct the activities because of the academic responsibilities of the students.

Second main problem is difficulty to raise funds.