

ST. THOMAS COLLEGE PALAI

NAAC Accredited with 'A' Grade (3rd Cycle, CGPA 3.30) in 2015

(Affiliated To Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam)



BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Promotion of Psychosomatic Health**
- 2. Value Education and Career Development**

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BEST PRACTICE - 1

1. Title of the Practice

Promotion of Psychosomatic Health

2. Objectives of the Practice

- Promotion of psychosomatic health for all is a need of the time. People must be given proper awareness regarding the importance of maintaining spiritual, emotional and mental balance.
- A comprehensive health programme targeting not only the staff and students of our college but also the local residents who can benefit from the programme.
- Inculcate eco-friendly habits and a healthy lifestyle among staff, students and the public
- Maintain the permanent vegetative cover of the campus at an optimal level.
- Keep the campus free from plastic and other toxic wastes by implementing a scientific waste management protocol.

3. The Context

The aim can be reached effectively through various stages including counselling for staff and students, regular health check-ups and training for various sports. The college grounds, integrated sports complex, health club and open gymnasium can be properly utilised to meet the objectives of our programme. These can provide a welcome relief from the hectic and tiresome academic schedule while allowing everyone to remain fit in both mind and body. The walker's lane in the campus is fully lighted and is accessible for the public as well. As an educational institution with 3000 students, a large volume waste, including plastic and e-waste, is generated in the campus. It is a tremendous task to train the students to adopt eco-friendly lifestyle changes. Awareness raising must include intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions. Lot of hazardous chemicals are daily handled in different laboratories in connection with research and practical of UG and PG students. The disposal of these by-products is a big challenge.

4. The Practice

Indian higher education system, being prominently classroom centred, faces great challenges in moulding the students into physically, mentally and emotionally healthy persons. So, these practices enable the students as well as the teachers to come out of their busy classroom schedule and allow them to spend time for relaxation and peace of mind. The main challenge during the implementation of the programme is to find enough time for these activities along with the densely packed academic schedule.

Specialized and general health camps are organized by the college on a regular basis. Mentoring and counselling opportunities are made available to the students. Some of our staff are passionate and specially trained in Yoga. They integrate yogic skills

with academics. Spiritual guidance is offered by Catholic priests who reside in the campus. The chapel in the campus is a space for experiencing peace and solace.

A host of activities are organized under the aegis of the Integrated Sports Complex. Summer coaching camps and training sessions are conducted in swimming, shuttle badminton and football. Health awareness programmes and competitions in various sports and games are arranged with huge public participation. Students are given basic training in swimming as part of “lifesaving skill acquisition” programme. Differently abled students are taught movement exercises suitable for each category. Efforts are also made to promote and popularize adventure sports.

We endeavour to maintain our campus free from plastic and other non-biodegradable wastes. At the institutional level there is a total ban on the use of Styrofoam/single use cups and plates. Teachers are regularly encouraging the students for the minimal and effective use of chemicals in their practical sessions. We provide water purifiers and filters of the highest standard to ensure the quality of potable water. The campus is blessed with a variety of trees and plants including rare species. We have a well-maintained lawn and a garden. We keep on planting new trees every year. We are planning to grow a garden exclusively for medicinal plants.

5. Evidence of Success

Notwithstanding the flood ravages, we have succeeded in maintaining a green and healthy environment, rich in biodiversity. This has proved to be crucial for the psychosomatic health of our community. Students take active part in cleaning drives on and off the campus. They have grown to become health conscious and some of them have turned into campaigners for healthy life choices. As a result of motivation by teachers, many students have stopped using disposable lunch packets and started using re-usable stainless-steel lunch boxes. Gardening initiative by students is also a sign of the realization of our objectives. Students of vocational education streams involve themselves in bio-farming activities. They are also in the forefront to raise awareness against junk foods and to promote a healthy food culture. In total disregard of the financial implications, our canteen scrupulously avoids all types of junk foods. The sports complex is utilised effectively and consistently by a good number of staff (both teaching and non-teaching) and students. A green audit is in place to monitor the activities associated with the sports complex.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- Difficulty in sensitizing the students to the concept
- Lack of adequate support from the local government
- Natural calamities affecting the flora
- The polluted state of the Meenachil river

7. Notes (Optional)

Nil.

BEST PRACTICE - 2

1. Title of the Practice

Value Education and Career Development

2. Objectives of the Practice

- Inculcate moral and ethical values into the life of all students by imparting moral and value education classes throughout the academic year
- Provide students different opportunities to practice the social values they acquire from the value education classes
- Make students aware of the career opportunities available for them after the current as well as higher education in their respective fields
- Provide students of all classes ample opportunity to develop employability skills, so that they will be suitable for different positions in various industries

3. The Context

Our academic community is a cross section of the entire society. The college, from its inception, is keen on imparting values to the students. The current scenario is characterized by a quest to redefine the value system. Only an institution with a profound cultural ethos and decades long experience can impart a value system suitable to our times without disrespecting the moral principles followed by the past generations.

The current job market is defined by the corporates in such a way that only those candidates who possess a specific set of skills and who can achieve a given target are selected, while others are sidelined. It is thus necessary to prepare the students to acquire these employability skills. The entrepreneurial skills of the students must also be fostered.

4. The Practice

As part of value education, moral and religious instruction are conducted every year. The faculty for value education, drawn from the teaching staff, are known for their exemplary moral insight and acumen. Moral education classes are imparted by the faculty, in a clearly set apart time schedule, following a well-structured syllabus. Examinations are also conducted based on the classes and cash prizes are distributed to the top scorers. Students are asked to bring one additional lunch on every Friday, which is collected and handed over to 'Mariasadan', a rehabilitation centre for persons with mental disabilities. This practice gives the students a practical lesson on different social and ethical values they study from the classes.

For career development of the students, a career and placement cell has been established in the college. The cell periodically conducts career orientation classes,

employability skill development training and soft skill development programmes. The teachers from all the departments of the college is actively involved in the career development programmes of the cell and conducts training programmes with a special focus on their respective fields of study. Different placement programmes are also conducted by the cell, in association with different employers including the Federal Bank and the South Indian Bank. In order to promote the entrepreneurial skills of the students, an entrepreneurship development club has been instituted in the college in association with Industries Department of the Govt. of Kerala. The club is actively organizing different training programmes to inculcate the entrepreneurial spirit among the students. An incubation centre is also being initiated in the College, to help the students to generate and experiment with innovative ideas.

5. Evidence of Success

The current students as well as the alumni of the college are actively involving in social issues of all kinds without compromising the value system. Students are actively participating in all such initiatives proposed by their departments. Every Friday, the College is able to supply sufficient number of lunch packets for the 300 inmates of 'Mariasadan', a rehabilitation centre for the mentally challenged.

Our graduates have proved themselves to be highly employable, having all the requisite skills. A good number of students are placed in different organizations every year, through in-campus and off-campus placement programmes. Many recently passed out students run successful businesses in different parts of the state.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Since the academic schedule is tightly packed, it is not easy to find enough working hours for conducting value education classes. Currently formal working hours for the same are limited to 5 hours/year. All other classes and training sessions are conducted outside the regular working hours of the college.

Since career development is not part of the formal syllabus and curriculum of any programme offered in the College, it is hard to find a time slot for conducting career development training programmes.

7. Notes (Optional)

Nil.