

7. CRITERIA VII: INNOVATION AND BEST

7.1 Environment Consciousness

7.1.1 Does the College conduct a Green Audit of its campus?

The college has not conducted any official Green Audit by an external agency. But, it has adopted various measures to maintain the greeneries of the campus and it has been observed that it creates a positive impact on the beholder and helps in developing an environment-friendly attitude in one and all.

7.1.2 What are the initiatives taken by the College to make the campus eco-friendly

Energy conservation :

- A new cooking system for the boarders of the campus has been installed which includes the use of modern cooking gas-oven etc. instead of coal.
- We have also installed a cooking boiler to speed up the cooking process which helps in the conservation of energy.
- The College has installed a Solar Water Heating System to boil the water instead of boiling it in on coal-oven.
- The College instills a spirit of energy saving in all stakeholders, particularly among the students.
- * Use of renewable energy
 - The College has installed a small unit of Grid-connected Solar Electricity Generating System. We have a MoU with CESC Limited for this purpose.
- * Water harvesting
 - Rain Water is collected in the ponds through a proper pipe line so that it is not wasted.
- * Check dam construction : Not applicable
- * Efforts for Carbon neutrality :

- **Minimisation in the use of coal in this campus is a serious measure adopted by the administration to reach the Carbon neutrality.**
- **Parking private cars outside the main campus has also helped us to reduce the carbon emission rate.**

- * Plantation**
 - **To keep the greeneries in the campus, we regularly maintain the gardens which are looked after by paid staff under the guidance of a monastic member.**
 - **No tree is cut unless it becomes dead. Moreover, every year we try to plant new trees.**
 - **Seasonal flower garden is also a unique feature of this college.**

- * Hazardous waste management**
 - **After the repeated request from the college authority the municipality has removed the open vats that were just outside the campus.**
 - **Bally Municipality has kept one big carriage where the garbage of the campus is put every day and the municipal authority takes it away regularly.**
 - **The College has renovated two laboratories in the Departments of Industrial Chemistry and Chemistry where the sewage system has been done in eco-friendly manner.**
 - **Two modern Fume Chambers have been installed in the departments of Industrial Chemistry and Chemistry which remove the acid fumes and harmful vapours of the laboratories.**

- * e-waste management :**
 - **E-waste is not kept anywhere on the campus, instead a room has been allotted where all such waste is stored.**

- * any other**
 - **Our NSS volunteers clean the campus every Sunday.**

7.2 Innovation

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

- **Online feedback System:** The College has put in place a compulsory online feedback system for the outgoing students who give their assessment on the functioning of the College.
- **E-class room:** To make teaching and learning more interactive the College has established eight e-classrooms.
- **Installation of renewable energy system:** A small unit of Grid-connected Solar Electricity Generating System has been installed in the College.
- **Introduction of Ultra Violet(UV) and Infra-Red(IR) spectroscopy facility in our Chemistry department Laboratory**
- **Introduction of Manuscript section in the Department of Bengali**
- **Introduction of M.Sc. Applied Chemistry course for the progression of Industrial Chemistry students in academic career.**

7.3 Best Practices

7.3.1 Give details of any two best practices which have contributed to better academic and administrative functioning of the College.

Among the best practices the College would like to highlight the following two:

Best practice 1:

1. Title of the Practice
 - ii. Value based education
2. Objectives of the Practice
 - i. The *gurukula* system that the College follows emphasizes not only the intellectual developments of the students but also their spiritual and

moral wellbeing. This is in keeping with the ideals of Swami Vivekananda.

3. The Context

- i. In designing this course the College had the total development of a student, the material and the spiritual, in mind. This was considered all the more necessary as the society was getting riven by greed and violence. The excessive secularization of the society was leading to a lopsided development of the individual. As a counterpoint to not so desirable developments the College decided to go for moral and spiritual nurturing of the students.

4. The Practice

- The students are made to study Indian Culture and Spiritual Heritage as a compulsory subject in all the semesters. The subject incorporates the following: a. Lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. b. Basic tenets of eight major religions of the world. c. Fundamental values of an ideal *vidyarthi* life. The students are evaluated at the end of each semester.
- The student life within the College is so organized that it makes them put into practice what they theoretically learn. From morning till night they follow a routine which carries an imprint of the spiritual orientations they have received in the classroom. It is compulsory for students to participate in the morning and evening prayers. The students also take part in the meditation sessions organized after morning and evening prayers.
- The *Vidyarthi Varana* where the existing students welcome the freshers is part of the unique ambience that the spiritual training of the students creates on the campus. The moment a newcomer enters the College his seniors become his mentor and guide. He is taken to his allotted accommodation by the seniors and initiates them into all aspects of the hostel and College life.
 - The *Vidyarthi homa* organized after a few weeks after the arrival of the freshers is the occasion for the students to take six vows of *Vidyarthi* life.

- This two-phased fresher's welcome creates a strong bond among the students from day one itself and continues even after.
- The students carry their theoretical and practical training with them to the larger world. The College does its part by organizing a farewell meeting for the passing out students and handing them literature pertaining to the Indian cultural and spiritual heritage.
- The uniqueness of value based education imparted by the College cannot be over emphasized.
 - The very existence of an institution of higher learning that has modeled itself on the traditional *gurukula* system is something rare.
 - The academic ambience created by this system gives students an opportunity for their moral and spiritual development. The close association of the monastic members of the College with students leads to a bonding that goes beyond academics.
 - Last but not the least is the total absence of incidents of ragging in the history of this residential College which is unique in the context of the contemporary situation of higher learning in India.
- The real challenge that the College administration faces is the remolding of students who are the 'single child' of a nuclear family and come from an urban setting. Some of these students are already exposed to certain not so healthy influences and it becomes a difficult task for the College authorities to make them 'unlearn' and come out of the impact of these influences.

5. Evidence of Success

- i. Though it is practically impossible to quantify the success of an education which focuses on the spiritual and the moral, there are indicators which point to the success of the value based education.

- ii. A recent incident can be cited to substantiate the success of the kind of spiritual training the students of Vidyamandira have received. In November 2012, Anjan Mondal, a student of the College was detected with Stevens Johnson Syndrome, a fatal disease. He was admitted to one of the best nursing home of Kolkata and attended to by a board of trauma specialists. This required a huge expenditure which his family could not afford. The students of Vidyamandira - past and present - teachers, the monastic members – all joined hands like members of a single and united family in raising Rupees 9.65 lakhs in only nine days for his treatment. Though Anjan did not survive, the spirit of brotherhood which value based education system tries to inculcate, was in evidence.

6. **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

- i. Modern value system or the lack of it poses a real threat to sustain value based education as it upholds certain ideas which are considered obsolete by many. Spirituality, morality and deference to traditional values are considered passé. How to change this mental set up poses a constraint for an institution like Vidyamandira.
- ii. Vidyamandira has the necessary resources to meet the challenges. Its teachers, non-teaching staff and monastic members form a team of dedicated individuals to offer lessons on theoretical and practical aspects of value based education.

Best practice 2:

1. **Title of the Practice : Online Feed-Back System**
2. **Objectives of the Practice**

Online feedback system was implemented in our college from the year 2006. The Objective was to receive a feedback on all aspects of the college and hostel. This was to ensure the all-round development of the college based on suggestions made by the students. This was considered the right method for making students not only an active participant in designing the teaching-learning and evaluation programme but making the whole process truly student-centric

3. The Context

The inadequacy of the existing teaching-learning process was greatly felt by all those involved with higher education in India. The virtual exclusion of students in the decision making process made it almost discriminatory. The direct participation of students in these matters was not welcomed to some of the stakeholders. To reconcile these contradictory pulls the college thought of a system where the students can have their say in an unobtrusive manner, this system of online feedback was devised

4. . The Practice

Our online feed back system was developed by a non-teaching staff of our college named Niladri Sekhar Chakrabarti who designed the whole system in Visual Foxpro. The system primarily consists of three parts, namely :

- Feedback for departments on the whole
- Feedback for individual teachers in the department
- Feedback on the working of the hostel, the office and the library.
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- The first part of the system consists of 14 questions each having 5 grades as options : A, B, C, D and E. A denotes 'Excellent', B 'Good', C 'Average', D 'Less than Average' and E 'poor'. Each student is asked to evaluate teachers by putting an appropriate grade of his choice against each question. The feedback system allows putting only the roll number. When the feedback report is collected from the server, the report does not contain any identity of the student.

- The second and third part of the feedback system is descriptive where students can write comments and opinions for the improvement of the functioning of the college. No one is allowed to enter into the lab including the supervisor (unless any technical error occurs), while the students are busy giving the feedback.
 - After the feedback from students is received, the entire report is generated containing the frequency of the grade given by the students against each question for the individual teacher.
- A feedback report is also generated for each department, hostel, library and college office.
- Once all the feedback reports are printed, Principal distributes it to all the teachers in a sealed envelope.
- Each teacher goes through the report and after that, a departmental meeting is arranged to discuss suggestions made by the students.

5. Evidence of Success

- Positive changes have taken place in the functioning of the college due to constructive suggestions made by the students in the feedback.
- The Administration and the faculty members have become more responsive to the aspirations of the students.
- The teaching-learning method has become more interactive. ICT classrooms have been introduced. Visual media has found greater prominence in the teaching process.
- The students' feedback has made the administration go beyond its financial capacity and appoint faculty members on its own.

To give an example, the Computer Science Department did not have any full time faculty member before 2009. It was on the basis of the suggestions made by the students of the department that the college authorities decided to appoint full time teachers. Today, the department has 3 management appointed full time teachers.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- **The online feedback system is still not full proof and is undergoing evolution. We are still working on a system which is totally unbiased and objective in its assessments. Personal likes and dislikes do influence the process even today.**
- **The college has the technological resources and the manpower necessary to successfully run the entire system.**