

2019-2020

Best Practice 1

- 1. Name of the practice:** TCS Training and Employability Programme.
- 2. Objectives of the practice:** It is an Affirmative Action Training Programme especially for the SCs / STs. It is a part of Corporate Social Responsibility of TCS. Following the ideals of our founder, the institution believes in creating a system of self-reliance that equips the students for life. The intention therefore was to create a system of knowledge outside the university syllabi that combined learning with career opportunities. Since a large number of our students came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, it was the avowed purpose of the institution not only to disseminate knowledge to the students but also to provide them with career opportunities.
- 3. The context:** Convincing the students, training the students from vernacular backgrounds, getting the students interview ready, making the students ready for a corporate culture and also ensuring that socially disadvantaged class of students formed the majority of the strength were some of the constant challenges.
- 4. The practice:** Higher education has increasingly become costly in India. The fee structure for technical education has gone beyond the reach of the common man. Privatization of higher education has only problematized the situation. Yet the right to education is a basic and fundamental right. Each individual should have equal access to resources. Guided by the philanthropy of Pandit Ishwar Chandra, the college aspired to provide free technical education to its students apart from the regular curriculum. One of the major problems encountered was that of the students dropping out of the programme mid-way. Despite this being a free course that opened up new vistas of interest and opportunities, most students backed out due to language problems. Inability to comprehend or communicate in English proved to be the greatest stumbling block. Lack of social exposure fuelled by low self-confidence often led to students feeling overwhelmed and intimidated, subsequently leading to drop outs.
- 5. Evidence of success:** The success rate was phenomenal. In 2019, 09 out of the 32 students got selected and further appointed by TCS. In 2020, 5 out of 39 students got their appointment letters. This is an incredible feat as it indicates the triumph of will and determination on the part of the students to overcome all odds. It is a commendable achievement for the college as well since it is able to fulfil its vision of preparing its students for life.
- 6. Problems encountered and resources required:** The resources required are basic like internet connection, computer/smart phone and stationary. Last but not the least the biggest resource/strength is the instructor from TCS. An enthusiast faculty that plans, implements and oversees the program is perhaps the strongest pillar of support. The problem however lies in getting the students to understand and appreciate the merit of this programme. Finding the requisite number of SC/ST students is a challenge every year. In the age of consumerism whatever comes for free is devalued. Since this programme does not have the gloss and sheen of corporate culture and is more of an outreach programme, the takers are few and evidently sceptical. In 2020, the entire exercise being online was challenging in a whole new way. A large chunk of our students come from interior areas and are economically challenged. Hence having a sustainable internet connection and affording internet data was a serious challenge for them. However the success rate of our students every year is the note of promise that keeps this training going.

Best Practice 2

1. **Name of the practice:** Mushroom Cultivation Training Program
2. **Objectives:** Following the ideals of our founder, the institution believes in creating a system of self-reliance that equips the students in for life. The students once they leave college must have something to give back to the institution and society at large. The intention was to create a system of knowledge outside the university syllabi that combined learning with career opportunities while contributing to the local and social scenario. The college decided to engage in and teach mushroom cultivation.
3. **The context:** With the aim of teaching a skill, Entrepreneurship Development Committee of Vidyasagar Evening College conducted a three month training course on Mushroom cultivation techniques to provide hands-on training to our students. Course was conducted in association with of one of our ex-students, Mr. Chiranjeet Samanta from Friends Agro.
4. **The Practice:** Mushrooms are being widely used for consumption both in India and worldwide due to their high nutritious value and at the same time low cholesterol content. Mushroom production requires very little infrastructure and relatively less investment. With government providing subsidy on setting up small farms for mushroom cultivation, it is proving to be a productive business opportunity for educated youth. Training was provided to 24 students. For practical lessons a mushroom cropping room was set up in the college and two different species of mushroom were cultivated. A manual containing protocols of mushroom cultivation which were followed during the course was also prepared which was given to students for future reference. The course saw the fruition of theory and praxis, combining class room teaching with practical lessons. Business strategies and marketing techniques were also taught to the students as a part of the course.
5. **Evidence of Success:** Out of 24 students, 21 completed the course. 9 are seriously and consistently cultivating mushrooms. While 11 students are cultivating mushrooms seasonally.
6. **Problems encountered and resources required:** A dynamic instructor and a profitable learning experience are the biggest strengths of this program. One of the persistent problems however is to convince the students to think out of the box, to take avenues beyond the trodden avenues of jobs and career opportunities. The biggest stumbling block however was the onset of the pandemic. The mushroom cultivation course of 2020 that started with 35 students had to be stopped abruptly due to the lockdown. The neo normal life in lockdown has been detrimental to the continuation of the course.