

# **BEST PRACTICES OF SHRI RAM COLLEGE OF COMMERCE**

## **ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21**

### **Best Practice I**

#### 1. Title

#### **Teaching-Learning through Blended Platforms:**

Developing Strategies for the Future with Technology-Mediated Ecosystems

#### **2. Objectives**

In its teaching-learning process, SRCC had started building complementary online resources and utilizing technology for its research and database applications. The objectives received sharper focus when the Covid crisis demanded a switch-over and enhancement of online facilities. The switch-over also meant online internal evaluation, open-book examination and assessment.

The objective has now moved towards blended learning systems so that online and in-person classes reach learning communities beyond the campus and offer newer courses beyond the curriculum. Our objective is to develop the blended platform as we start implementing similar goals set out in the New Education Policy.

#### **3. Context**

Blended learning has been evolving as a teaching-learning method since 1990s. The global COVID 19 crisis made the contactless teaching learning process a mandatory requirement. However, the College was already gearing up for using online mode for its value-added courses and development of learning resources in the last five years. It had started investing in infrastructure augmentation, such as setting up of the recording Media Lab. As the Colleges are gradually reopening, the College has also turned to developing smart classrooms which can handle online as well as in-person teaching. It is an emerging scenario in the Universities across India as the New Education Policy, 2020 also emphasizes the importance of blended and online platforms to foster equitable and inclusive education.

#### **4. Practice**

The practice of blended learning in conventional brick-and-mortar learning ecosystem is meant to bolster inclusive education. The opportunity to ameliorate our online systems coincided with the College developing learning resources at the National level for the National Resource Centre. Shri Ram College of Commerce was awarded the **National Resource Centre (NRC)** status in Commerce and Economics by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, under **Annual**

**Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT)** in 2019 and 2020 through **Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) portal** over a period of sixteen weeks.

With the lockdown due to Covid becoming a challenging reality in March 2021, the College needed to quickly put in place a system that would connect teachers and students in an efficient and effective manner. A learning online platform was created and all students and Faculty Members could interact through MS- Teams for lecture and tutorial classes. It also provided teachers an avenue to share academic resources and students to make presentations or submit assignments.

When the pandemic situation showed little respite, alongside teaching, internal tests, open-book exams and assessment posed greater challenges and made us adopt technological innovations often guided by our Faculty, University as well as external Professionals. This was a new environment and we needed to adapt quickly. Our teachers, staff and students showed exemplary willingness to be active stakeholders in this transitional phase.

One of the noteworthy initiatives in this regard has been the **Faculty Development Programme (FDP) under the aegis of Atal Academy** established by AICTE, for enhancing the knowledge of Faculty Members and Professionals. SRCC has been conducting multiple **FDPs** and **Professional Development Programmes (PDPs)** over the past years. Several value-added courses on online platform have been made available to students and Faculty. The online platform makes it possible to offer innovative courses and widen the reach of these courses to benefit more students.

Meanwhile, the task of upgrading the College infrastructure became a priority particularly in the areas of IT infrastructure and hardware spread. On a trial basis, two classrooms have been equipped with gadgets that can make remote students a part of the physical classroom. This is *technology-based blended learning process*. Students can interact remotely as well as in a physical mode and thereby meet the necessary covid norms. The software also provides for enormous resource pooling, sharing and making the learning process far more enriched in the long term.

## **5.Evidence of Success**

The teaching-learning process that faced a major challenge due to the pandemic was effectively managed with online interventions and it is a continuing process as colleges are gradually reopening to adapt to a new normal. For us, the new normal is a blended-learning mode and we are inspired by our current outcomes. For instance, the number of enrolments for our Refresher Courses as well as for the FDPs, show significant volumes. The online 'Refresher Course in Commerce' had **10182 enrolments from participants across India**. The online 'Refresher Course in Economics' was also well received. Till date, there are 1220 subscribers with over 1 lakh views on the uploaded videos.

As a part of the National Resource Centre (NRC), the College has shown remarkable capabilities in pursuing excellence. For 'Economics', SRCC is the **only designated NRC in the country**. For the Commerce discipline, we are one amongst the two centres to have been awarded the same.

To enhance students' existing skill sets, several value-added courses were introduced. Students have immensely benefitted from these courses due to wide reach in the online medium. The courses are closely linked to the industry requirements and supplement the academic curriculum with application-oriented learning through collaboration with external knowledge delivery partners. Some of the courses include '*Business Analytics: Introductory Courses using R*', '*Data Analytics with R*', '*Accounting Star*', *Legal Literacy* and *Coursera online programmes*.

## **6.Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

The College needed to scale up the logistics to cater to the sudden demand prompted by the online mode to augment the existing state-of-the art physical and digital infrastructure. At the College end, logistical, technical and wi-fi connectivity issues had to be tackled. For students, the problems were plenty. We have

students from remote corners of the country where connectivity is inadequate and electricity supplies are erratic. Possessing digital equipment for online mode was not easy in some cases. Economic conditions of some students were not conducive to this switchover. Resources aligned to the online/blended mode were required.

The College helped economically disadvantaged students with scholarships and equipment grants, to its best capacity. We are hopeful that alumni and donors will also contribute in our efforts to lead the change.

## **7.Notes**

Our experience with blended/online learning can be beneficial for other institutions. Three areas that have emerged as sites for intervention are: Learning to function effectively with the new mode by both teachers and students, infrastructure development in line with technological means and innovative use of online/blended platform to maximize the benefit of transformation. We are working on all three fronts and preparing ourselves for a future-ready Institution. Our objective remains on reaching out to the vast number of students with innovative courses that are in line with contemporary developments. We believe in pursuing excellence by providing quality education to prepare compassionate and visionary global leaders. Blended/online teaching-learning practice is the means to realize these goals. In line with the New Education Policy, higher educational institutions must pro-actively adopt blended learning to promote equitable quality education.

## Best Practice II

### 1. Title

Energy and Environmental Outreach: Sustainability and Social Entrepreneurship

### 2.Objectives

The mainstays of SRCC's value system are being a responsible and ethical stakeholder and giving back to society a small token in lieu of the greater gifts it has bestowed on us. The College has commenced a Social Outreach Initiative with the twin goals of Sustainable Development and Social Entrepreneurship. While the former aims to create a more sustainable world, the latter enables the creation of livelihood opportunities. The Social Outreach Initiative sensitise students to socio-economic challenges facing the country with hands-on experience.

### 3.Context

We live in the times of high consumption, be it material, energy or otherwise. Key to sustainability is the moderate the consumption through innovation and reduce-recycling-reuse techniques. In the past few years, the College has proactively initiated projects in the areas of Solar Energy, Solid Waste Management and Rain-Water Harvesting. This not only provides development alternatives but also makes the College campus environmentally friendly. There are economic benefits too that accrue from these initiatives.

Social Entrepreneurship is pursued with great zeal by our students through several units like, Enactus, NSS, Vittashala, Connecting Dreams, among others. In these difficult pandemic times, they have reached out to marginalised communities to sustain their livelihoods.

### 4.Practice

Sustainability in terms of Energy, Waste-Recycling and Water Harvesting were identified as three priority areas for intervention. As a committed institution towards environment protection, SRCC launched **SOLAR POWER PROJECT** for generating electricity with an objective to reduce carbon footprint through generation of clean and renewable energy. Under a 25-year agreement with Tata Power Renewable Ltd. (TPREL), the project has a generation capacity of 425 kWp and caters to about 45% of the College's net energy requirements. **Waste Segregation and Solid Waste Recycling** is done for bio-waste generated on the campus and it helps to create organic fertilizers. The **Rain Water Harvesting** has helped us to recharge ground water that is used in the hostels, residences, gardens and swimming pool.

In terms of Social Entrepreneurship and Community Projects, students and their teacher mentors have launched successful initiatives and a few prominent ones are being listed here:

(i)Projects by Enactus

**Asbah** provides clean drinking water to rural households and urban slums at affordable rates. **Virasat** aims to revive languishing craft forms of India by creating opportunities and empowering artisans. Project has impacted 185+ artisans, increasing their income by 300%.

**Amal** aims at minimizing the catastrophic impact of stubble burning by converting it into smokeless biochar briquettes, fortifying char powder, and affordable construction material.

**Leher** is a waste management project aimed at tackling the environmental spill over of cigarette butts by up-cycling them into various useful products.

In light of the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, the student fraternity of SRCC joined hands with “**Doctors For You**” by funding the establishment of an Oxygen Plant in the Commonwealth Games Centre.

**Aavran** aimed to provide khadi and cotton face masks at highly affordable rates, while simultaneously generating employment opportunities.

(ii)Projects by Connecting Dreams Foundation

**Arpan** is a floral waste management model which solves the problem of micro-level pollution through the production of flower-based charcoal-free incense sticks.

**Aarogya** aims to combat the issue of menstrual hygiene by establishing a low-cost supply chain of sanitary napkins in the urban slums of Delhi and nearby states. It has created 8 entrepreneurs and provided 2,47,000+ sanitary pads impacting 51000+ lives.

**Rivaayat** attempts to revive the fading art form of terracotta pottery through a direct market connection model. It has impacted the lives of 17 potters across 4 different areas and also increased their income by 104%.

**Dream library** has implemented 12 libraries, donated 3600+ books, and influenced the lives of 1650+ slum children.

(iii)Projects by NSS

**Sanskar** assists students belonging to the weaker sections by providing them with free education.

**Vishwas** aims to empower the differently-abled people by providing them sustainable employment.

Under **Project Kali**, the Jhatav community of Shadipur was adopted where 350+ people live in transit camps slum.

(iv) Projects by Vittashala

**Asha** aims to spread awareness among the factory and domestic workers who are semi-skilled and unskilled, about financial prudence & various government schemes.

**Umeed** focuses on uplifting the Grade IV workers present in colleges and educational institutions. **Sahay** is an attempt is being made to bring about a positive impact in the lives of children as a multiplicative engine.

**Neev** targets the change-makers in society i.e. the youth.

## 5.Evidence of Success

The Solar Energy initiative has reduced College's carbon foot-print by 533.4 tonnes. Over 1310 solar panels installed generate over 1500 units of electricity/day. The College has generated over 5,85,000 units, resulting in cost savings of Rs. 47,67,750.

The social outreach projects have impacted many. Some highlights are shared as under:

**Asbah** has 13 plants, employing 26 women entrepreneurs and reached 37,500+ people.

**Amal** has reduced carbon dioxide emissions by processing 91,000 kgs of stubble into smokeless biochar briquettes.

**Leher** has sensitized 43,000+ people and saved 5,50,00,000 litres of water from toxic waste.

To set up the **Oxygen Plant** with a capacity of approximately 150 litres of oxygen per minute, Rs. 35 lakhs were raised to save 20-30 lives at a time.

**Aavran** was successful in helping 10 women entrepreneurs. Enactus also conducted food distribution drives with various organizations amounting to Rs. 8 lakhs for 18,000 people.

**Enactus SRCC** represented Enactus India in the **Enactus World Cup** in San Jose, California in 2018. They emerged as the 2nd Runners Up and were felicitated with the '*World Trade Centre Award for Impact and Innovation*' for Project Virasat from amongst 1200+ projects worldwide. Project Asbah was adjudged **Winner of the World Water Race** by Enactus in Silicon Valley, California among 120+ projects from across the globe. The team won the **Health Impact Award** at the Asia Social Innovation Awards 2020 by Johnson & Johnson.

**CDF-SRCC** won the **Hult Prize, Dhaka Nationals** and qualified to enter the **Global Accelerator Program**. They were the winners at **Misfits Incubation Challenge** to qualify for Global Event, South Asia. They won **the Social Business Plan at Niti Aayog Conference** and secured second position in **Business Plan presentation at World Entrepreneurship Forum**.

Through **Vittashala's** initiatives, a total of 1200+ school students, 1500+ undergraduate students, 525+ industrial workers, slum dwellers, and grade IV employees were impacted through projects initiated in the academic session 2020-21.

Shri Ram College of Commerce has also been recognized as the **District Green Champion** for the academic year 2021-22, by the **Ministry of Education, Government of India**. The Certificate for the same has been awarded to the institution for **elevating the Swachhta Action Plan**, adopting and implementing **best practices in the areas of Sanitation, Hygiene, Waste Management, Water Management, Energy Management and Greenery Management**.

## **6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

Some of the challenges faced include situations when these student societies and cells fell short of requisite funds. However, with successful partnerships and collaborations, they were able to overcome this. More often, they faced the challenge of community mobilization which was tackled by their strong on-ground presence and information, education and communication (IEC) activities. Another major challenge was

establishing credibility among the beneficiaries and the society as a whole. However, with the continuous support from the Principal, able guidance of the Faculty Advisors and display of the students' commitment, the trust of the beneficiaries was earned.

With the world facing an unprecedented pandemic, lakhs of people have lost their jobs. The students of SRCC did not let this adversity dampen their spirits. Rather, they saw it as an opportunity to expedite the ongoing projects from their homes and continued to impact lives and spread hope during such challenging times.

## **7. Notes**

Benchmarking is an important dimension in social projects to track the intended outcomes accruing to the targeted beneficiaries. In social outreach programmes, it is crucial to identify the different impact that an initiative can generate. Systematic pre-implementation survey to identify the issues is a necessity. Innovation and creative problem-solving also makes for the efficient outcomes. Similarly, resource planning and mobilisation is also essential for success.

One of the most relevant issues connected with social outreach is the initiative's outcome and targeted beneficiaries. In our projects, the primary focus has been to identify the problems, work out apt solutions and reach out to targeted beneficiaries. Be it community welfare projects or financial literacy projects, structured plans of action, time-bound implementation and intermittent review have yielded good results. This motivates us as an Institution to expand our Social Outreach Initiatives and Sustainability Projects further in the coming years.