

Fergusson College (Autonomous), Pune

Best Practices

Best Practice-I: Title of the Practice: Mapping Campus Biodiversity.

Goal:

- Create awareness about importance of campus biodiversity.
- Equip students to use various research techniques in biodiversity studies.

The Context: India is a signatory to the International Biodiversity Convention and is bound to document and preserve biological diversity of the country. The Fergusson College campus is rich in biodiversity with a variety of habitats.

The Practice: As an attempt in this direction, some students under the Rangers' Eco club have been monitoring the biodiversity on the Fergusson college campus and the hill since 2008. The college has a large campus with a rich floral diversity. The major habitats on the campus include hill top, hill slope, plantations, gardens, open spaces and buildings. Many teachers and students from Zoology, Botany, Geology, Environmental Science and Geography departments have been working on various biodiversity related topics based on the campus, as a part of the UGC- CPE activity. Many teachers and students have been studying, watching and photographing the biodiversity on the campus and the hill on a regular basis as a hobby. Botany and Zoology students are regularly taken to the college hill as a part of the curricula (study visit) for floral and faunal surveys.

Evidence of Success: Some of results of such studies are as follows:

- **Floral diversity**

The campus is quite green with a diversity of trees. About 200 plant species have been enumerated on the campus by earlier teachers and students. Mr. Ashish Nerlekar, a past student has been monitoring the campus flora since 2014.

- **Faunal diversity**

- (a) **Invertebrate diversity**

The spider survey was conducted by Mr. Ashwin Varudkar, a 2014 BSc. (Zoology) batch student. He collected information on more than 60 species of spiders from the campus. He also developed a photography album on the butterflies on the campus.

- (b) **Vertebrate diversity**

Every year students of the Rangers' club, conduct a 'bird transect' (belt) across the campus during the winter months and document campus diversity. A group of students participated in the "Back-yard bird count" in February 2015 and reported 60 species from the campus. The data have been uploaded on the "www.e-bird.org", a website maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, USA. Many students have been working on different aspects of the campus biodiversity as a part of the CPE-UG projects. Students have also been monitoring butterflies and spiders of the campus. They have added other faunal groups like mammals, bats and reptiles. The outcome of the survey may be summarized as follows:

Type of life group	Number of species	Students and Teachers who collected the information
Spiders	60	Warudkar (2013)
Butterflies	90	Warudkar & Patankar (2013)
Reptiles	19	Warudkar & Nalavade (2014)
Amphibians	05	Warudkar(2014)
Birds	105	Raut et al (2012)
Mammals	11	Warudkar and Salve (2014)

The survey findings and estimates of campus biodiversity have also been published in conference proceedings and in reputed national journals.

Projects on Biodiversity under UGC- CPE Scheme

Sr. No.	Title of the Project	Names of Students
1.	Study of Diversity and Urbanization of Spiders of Fergusson College Campus.	Ashwin Warudkar
2.	Study of Birds and bird habitats of the Fergusson College campus.	Samrat Salve and Ashish Raut
3.	Study of Diversity of Wild Mammals of Fergusson College Campus.	Samrat Salve and Ashwin Warudkar
4.	Algal Diversity of Fergusson College, Pune	Ms. Vividha Raunekar, Ms.Shubhangi Raskar, Rushab Rathod and Digvijay Patil
5.	Mapping of Rare Species on Vetral Hill	Akshay Onkar
6.	Documentation of the Butterfly Species found in Fergusson College	Ms. Anushka Rege
7.	Angiosperm Diversity of Different Habitats in Pabe Ghat near Sinhagad, Maharashtra	Ms. Rutuja Barate
8.	Herpetofaunal Mortality Due to Vehicular Movement in Tamhini Ghat, Northern Western Ghats, maharashtra	Anish Pardeshi
9.	Diversity and Distribution of Aquatic Insects in Pashan Lake of Pune, Maharashtra	Ms. Ramya Roopa
10.	Mapping the roosting colonies of Flying fox bat around Pune	Ashwin Warudkar and Gaurav Kalyani

Best Practice-II

1. Title of the Practice: Fostering Social Responsibility

2. Goal

- To instill a sense of social responsibility in students.
- To engage the students in meaningful service that meets community needs.
- To equip the students with skills, attitude and knowledge to work with the disadvantaged sections of society.

3. **The Context:** The purpose of education is not just preparing the students for a livelihood but also to make them good citizens and above all good human beings. Values of caring and sharing with the less privileged are one of the important elements of such education. It is our collective responsibility to empower the underprivileged to become self-reliant so that they can live with respect and dignity. It is our duty to uphold the human rights of all disadvantaged sections of society. Our college encourages a lifelong ethic of community service.

Practices

- The college has a Social Outreach & Enabling Centre which gives an opportunity to the students to work with various civil society organizations. Around 300 students work with children from the underprivileged communities, on women's issues, de-addiction and counseling, children with disabilities, environmental issues and human rights issues. Broadly the work includes conducting surveys, organizing awareness campaigns, counseling, assisting teachers in day to day activities & during school annual days and other functions, conducting art and craft workshops, organizing clothes, toys and book collection drive and administrative work.
- We work with 15 civil society organizations namely KKPKP(*Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat*) - a waste collectors' organization, Ankur Vidyamandir - an inclusive school, Doorstep School - a school for the underprivileged children, Aalochana - a women's documentation centre, Vanchit Vikas - an organization working with urban poor, hawkers, sex workers and their children, Prism Foundation - an educational organization working with children with special needs Santulan - a drug de-addiction centre, Mook Badhir Shikshan Kendra - a school for deaf and mute children, Department of Social Initiatives- Forbes Marshall, Hutatma Rajguru School - a neighbourhood school for the underprivileged children, Tathapi - a women's organization working on the issues of women and health, Sant Ramdas School - a Pune Municipal primary school, Deep Griha Society - an urban community centre, Aakansha Foundation and Green Campus Initiatives. Saathi is another initiative to integrate students with blindness into the college main stream. This is achieved through several activities like peer mentoring, self-improvement workshops and participation in regular college activities and annual celebration of Louis Braille Day.
- **International Students' Facilitation Centre:** Fergusson College has always been one of the most popular destinations for international students in Pune. Presently, there are 269 students from 36 countries in the college. The International Students' Facilitation Centre addresses the needs of international students and helps them adapt to the college milieu.

The activities of the Centre include Orientation programme, tour of Pune city to places of cultural and historical interest, film screenings, student presentations on their respective countries, interaction with past international students of the college, communications skills' workshop. The highlight of the centre is the annual cultural programme, Panorama. It has been one of the major attractions amongst the cultural festivals in the college during the last 8 years. What makes this programme distinctive is that the flags of all the countries form the backdrop on the stage and the programme ends with the singing of the national anthems of all the participating nations.

4. **Evidence of Success:** The press has given coverage to the work done by the social outreach and enabling centre. Also several NGOs approach us for volunteers. The students have benefited a great deal. It has given them confidence in working with the community. It has been a process of self discovery for many.

The International Students Facilitation Centre has helped in bridging the gap between the international students and the teachers / administration and in building camaraderie amongst the students.

Best Practice-III

1. **Title of the Practice: Towards Gender Equality**

2. **Goal**

- a) To sensitize the students to various dimensions of gender discrimination.
- b) To engage the students in activities that would empower them to work towards a gender just society.

3. **The Context:** There is an alarming rise in violence against women. No society can claim itself to be developed if half its populace is deprived of a dignified existence. As citizens of India it is our primary duty to uphold the values of equality, liberty, justice and fraternity enshrined in our Constitution.

4. **The Practice:** Fergusson College is committed to the cause of gender equality and has been undertaking several programmes towards this end. They are academic, awareness and action oriented.

Academic Oriented Programmes

- **Certificate course in ‘Women and Development’:** This is a three month part time certificate course conducted by Women’s Studies Centre, SSPU, Pune which we have been conducting for the past 8 years. This has received an overwhelming response from students.
- **Student Research Projects:** 8 short term student research projects on gender issues have been undertaken so far in collaboration with some of the pioneering women’s groups in Pune like Aalochana, Tathapi and SWaCH. The research projects are: capacity building for women in Water Users’ associations in collaboration with SOPPECOM (Society for promoting participative ecosystem management), rural deserted women in Bahe in collaboration with SOPPECOM, mapping child care in the area of Kalakhadak slum, PCMC in collaboration with TATHAPI; resource base on ‘gender’; ‘The working of CASH (Committee against sexual harassment) in Pune colleges; ‘Waste, waste-pickers and their lives’; case studies of waste collectors; survey on sexual harassment and portrayal of masculinity in Bollywood cinema.
- **Workshops / Seminars / Guest Lectures:** These have gone a long way in creating awareness about gender issues. 20 workshops, seminars and lectures have been organized on issues of gender violence, legal literacy, engendering governance, sexual harassment, masculinities, queer politics and women and developmental issues.
- **Paper Presentation by Students on “Studying Gender: Experiences and Reflections”** at a National Seminar on “Interrogating Gender Studies: teaching, research & practices in Sociology and other disciplines” organized by Department of Sociology, SPPU Pune.

Awareness Oriented Programmes

Street Plays and Poster Exhibitions: We have 150 posters and 5 street plays that have been performed on several occasions. Street plays like *Ansuni Awaaz* on issue of sex selective abortions, *Chedkhani Band* on sexual harassment, *Nirbhaya* on violence against women, *Azadi* on breaking free from the shackles of patriarchy, *Bas Ab Aur Nahin* on dimensions of gender discrimination and way towards equality were very well received.

Forum for Gender Equality: This is an active students' forum and its activities include weekly discussions, film screenings, awareness campaigns, conducting surveys, poster exhibitions and street plays to spread the message of gender equality. This year it conducted a survey on sexual harassment and a campaign on menstrual hygiene.

Independence Day (August 16, 2012): Theme "Women Hold Half the Sky". A poster exhibition was held depicting different forms of discrimination against women, gender stereotypes and dimensions of violence against women. Film screening of "Bol" on domestic violence, street play - *ansuni awaaz* on the issue of female foeticide was performed.

International Fortnight (Nov.25 to Dec.10) to Stop Violence against Women is observed as the International Fortnight to Stop Violence against women. Activities are organized in collaboration with different women's groups.

Participation in "One Billion Rising" (February 14, 2013): This was a global event organized to protest against the growing violence against women. In Pune the theme was '*saat nantar ghara baher*' - making public spaces safer for women. Our students participated in this.

World Human Rights Day - Women's Human Rights (December 10, 2011): The Sociology Club celebrated this day by having a quiz on women's human rights, poster exhibition, group discussion on 'right to the city'.

Action Oriented Programmes

Women's Safety Audit of College Campus: (December 2012) This was undertaken to make the campus safer for women as a part of Jagar Janeevancha Campaign.

Campaigns: Campaigns like men against gender violence and combating sex selective abortion were organized. Activities included essay writing, poetry, collages and poster making, group discussions and awareness rallies.

- 5. Evidence of Success:** It is very heartening to note the gradual change of attitude amongst students after the exposure to various programmes.
- 6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**
Misogyny is so deep rooted in our society that changing patriarchal mindset is a humongous task. Also issues related to women, sexuality and family evoke a strong emotive response and rational thinking often flounders.

Best Practice-IV

1. **Title of the Practice: Industry-Institute Interface in Teaching Learning**
2. **Goal: Integrate Industry component in Teaching-Learning Process**
3. **The Context:** The purpose of education is not to secure degrees but equip them to face the challenges in real life and gain employability after completion of their academic programme(s). Over a period of time, there has been a considerable gap between the academia and industry. It was in the year 2010, we thought of establishing Industry-Institute Interaction Cell apart from Training and Placement Cell. In the past few years this Cell has gained enough momentum and has strengthened the relationship with almost all types of industries. Sectorial career Summits, Panel Discussion, Guest Lectures, Expert Interactions and Special training programmes for both students and teachers have become a regular feature under this Cell.

In the previous year, we have clubbed Industry-Institute Interaction Cell, Training and Placement Cell and newly established “Entrepreneurship Development Cell” under one umbrella and christened it as “Career Facilitation Center”. There have been formal collaborations with some industries and also increase placement % of students. Industry participation is also there while framing the new syllabi under autonomy as well as industries also provide feedback on the syllabi.

Practices

Evidence of Success:

- (a) Actual participation of Industry/ Industry experts for framing syllabi
- (b) Regular Feedback on the syllabi from relevant/ subject specific industries.
- (c) Formal collaborations with industries which has helped in gainful employment of students.
- (d) Special training programmes for teacher’s as well students for knowledge updation and skill development.
- (e) Organization of Sectorial Career Summits and special programme called “Campus to Corporate” for all students.

Best Practice-V

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