

## **Best Practice 1**

### **Extension Activities**

The existence of the College is the outcome of single-minded dedication of many kind hearts. The Institution considers it their moral responsibility to carry forward this baton of good work and hand it over to the next generation. Who can be better recipients than the souls that drank from the pond! Shasun founded the Centre of Extension Activities to kindle the service mind in the students and feed their constant craving for knowledge and exposure.

Extension programmes of Shasun are ‘learnings taking place beyond the classrooms’ and augment the sense of compassion for others. It helps to build relationships while working with NGOs, government agencies, companies, etc. It affirms to make a difference when they do something with what they have learnt.

The numerous clubs of Shasun and the various departments involve themselves in extension activities to create a social connect and community engagement.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE**

The objective of extension activities for students are:

- To provide opportunities for the students to engage in social service and community activities.
- To kindle a socially conscious mindset among the students.
- To impart value-based holistic education in keeping with the vision of the college.

The intended outcomes are that

- The students would learn to think beyond their needs
- The students would share the knowledge and skills acquired with the underprivileged community.

- These initiatives would shape the student in a holistic manner which goes beyond classroom learning.
- The concept is to provide the students with a purpose to learn and set goals for their future that extends beyond the self.

## **THE CONTEXT**

The institution has instituted clubs such as NSS, Youth Red Cross, Red Ribbon Club, Leo Club, Rotaract Club, Yuva Shakthi Club and Environment Club since its formative years. As the departments of the college grew to include Department of Visual Communication, Psychology, English Literature, and Home Science Interior and Décor, the interest areas of the student body also diversified. In order to engage the students, new clubs such as Art and Craft Club, Fitness Club, Advertisement Club, Heritage Club, to name a few, were installed.

As the college situated in the centre of the city and catering to a student body which has access to education and other basic amenities, it was felt by the institution that students should be made awareness of the privileges they enjoy. Simultaneously, the students should be aware of a section of the society which might have difficulty to gain access to the same amenities. Hence, keeping with the vision of the institution, all constituted clubs identify activities focussing on the community.

Apart from conducting activities and competitions which focussed on inclusiveness, environmental consciousness and health of the students, the clubs also conduct activities for the extended community and society. The departments also conduct a few extension activities and also help with coordination of the students.

## **THE PRACTICE**

The clubs instituted in the college plan regular activities within and outside the college premises. The students become members of the club of their choice. They register themselves into a club in the first year of their college. They are active participants during the first two years, though they are free to pursue the same during their final year too. These initiatives blend academics and extracurricular activities to ensure students receive holistic education and value addition.

The institution has collaborated with NGOs to identify the need in the society and thereby provide timely and specific help. As the nation and city emerged from the pandemic, Greater Chennai Corporation also provided opportunities for students to engage themselves in volunteering work. Through these extension activities, clubs and departments reached out to various city and government schools.

The nature of the extension activities is community service undertaken by clubs and knowledge sharing and enhancement by the departments.

The institution has 18 clubs such as NCC, Rotaract Club, Red Ribbon Club, Youth Red Cross, Yuva Shakthi Club, Environment Club, Heritage Club, Art and Craft Club and so on. Students of the college register their preferred club and take up activities organised by the respective clubs. Each club organises extension activities by identifying an area of service through the guidance and in collaboration with NGOs and Government bodies. Activities such as volunteering for COVID patients data tracking, mega vaccination camps, sapling plantation in schools, hair donation to support cancer patients, Swachhta Packwada, Poshan Ma, distribution of food packets and provisions, beach cleaning, anti-plastic cleanliness drives, awareness programmes and rallies. Departments have also extended their support to engage themselves in extension activities. This was done in an effort to efficiently coordinate the students and involve them in various social service activities.

## **EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS**

According to the institution, the biggest success is when a student thinks of others even while she is in a delicate situation. This was proved when students volunteered to join hands with Greater Chennai Corporation during the pandemic. Many students and their families suffered in health and loss of loved ones. Despite this, SIXTY-TWO students volunteered and helped GCC with Virtual Volunteering for the Post COVID Follow up Project.

- During the pandemic caused by CoronaVirus and the lockdown which followed, students were forced to stay indoors. However, as the number of COVID-19 positive cases increases, the Government set up war rooms to keep the situation under control 24/7. Greater Chennai Corporation and the NGO Chennai Volunteers introduced to our students Virtual Volunteering to help COVID-19 patients. In 2020, 14 students of our

institution worked from home as Virtual Volunteers to provide Psychosocial Support to COVID-19 positive patients.

- Continuing the same in 2021, the college coordinated with GCC again and this time, around 62 students worked on a daily basis from May 2021 to July 2021, reaching out to more than 51,733 patients. The students made daily calls to post-COVID patients to collect health updates related to post-COVID complications, crucial information on Black Fungus, and status of vaccination. The student volunteers mediated between the public and the Government officials to help arrange for ambulances, hospital beds, oxygen cylinders, death certificates, and sanitary needs.
- The students collected and provided crucial data for doctors and medics to provide immediate care to COVID patients who were in quarantine and isolation. It inculcated strength and positivity among the students. Many students volunteered because their family members had been afflicted and the Corporation officials had helped them. Now the students wanted to give back to society. This mindset created a sense of social responsibility and belongingness among the students.

Apart from this, listed below are a few of the significant extension activities conducted by the clubs.

- On 26.07.2021-28.08.2021, RRC students rendered volunteer work to create awareness on the Right to Education Act (RTE) through Tele-Counselling for the parents of underprivileged children. 25 student volunteers worked on this project from 26th July to 28th of August 2021, we have reached out to around 1158 beneficiaries calls count.
- **Swachhta Pakwada** was observed by the students of the college from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021 through the following activities:
  - Volunteers did **plantation** of saplings under the Swachhata Packwada Mission at their residential areas in Avadi, Chrompet, Madipakkam, Nanganallur and many other places.
  - **Plastic Pick Walk** : Volunteers went on a walk at their residential areas collecting the plastics at the surroundings and disposed them properly in non-biodegradable wastes dustbins in Avadi, Chrompet, Madipakkam, Nanganallur and many other places

- **Water bodies preservation drive** : Volunteers organised for a cleaning programme around the Madipakkam lake under the Swachhata Packwada Mission at MADDIPAKKAM LAKE VIEW, CHENNAI DISTRICT.
- **Circum Cleaning** : Volunteers cleaned the public areas around their residential areas under Swachhata Packwada mission
- **Temple Cleaning** at Pathala Vinayagar Temple, Madipakkam
- **Door To Door Awareness** : Volunteers reached the doorsteps of the people at their residential areas and created awareness on various themes such as plastic awareness, waste management, water conservation and more in Avadi, Chrompet, Madipakkam, Nanganallur and many other places
- Rotaract Club organised "**தூசுமீ**" on account of International Charity Day by providing food packets to the needy and poor in Mandaveli, Mylapore, Adyar, Kotturpuram, KK Nagar, Kodambakkam, West Mambalam
- NSS organised **Blood Donation Camp and Eye-Checkup camp** along with TAP VIT - UNION for the general public in the college campus
- Students of Yuva Shakthi Club visited children of Tansowa Adharavu Illam and spend quality time with them by engaging them in a candy wrapping activity. The candies had social messages. The wrapped candies were then distributed among the public by our students in T.Nagar, Virugambakkam & other places.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED**

The most crucial and foremost problem encountered by the institution is the safety of each of its students. Social activity should always reach the needy. Hence, volunteers should be in a position to travel to the location of service. Being a women's college and with the student population which is from in and around Chennai and other neighbouring districts, the college is always concerned with safe travel and accommodation. Considering the new normal circumstances after the pandemic, the college authorities and the parents of the wards are apprehensive about letting their wards engage in a crowded location. Consent letters are obtained from parents before a student is engaged in any activity. Safety measures are followed and students are escorted to and from the venue of the activity.