Best Practice-I Inclusivity

Context

We recognise that marginalisation is a complex and multifaceted aspect of our society, encompassing socio-economic inequalities, gender biases, discrimination against individuals with disabilities, and regional disparities. As an institution committed to social responsibility and ethical awareness, we are resolute in our determination to implement practices and set examples that promote inclusivity and strive to integrate marginalised communities into the mainstream. From its establishment, the college has employed a multifaceted approach to foster the integration of marginalised individuals. Firstly, the administration consistently ensures the implementation of constitutional, statutory, legal, and policy guidelines set by the state to empower and include marginalised groups, without compromising any aspects. Secondly, the college's policy framework and decision-making processes actively encourage inclusion through institutional practices and the development of infrastructure. We actively collaborate with civil society to eradicate all forms of discrimination. Lastly, our curriculum is designed to instil sensitivity in our students towards the challenges faced by the marginalised communities and the importance of proactive measures to facilitate inclusion. The following are some of the inclusive practices embraced by ZHDC—

Objectives

- To implement policies, practices, and infrastructure that foster the inclusion of marginalised individuals.
- To provide students with the chance to engage in social outreach programs and act as catalysts for positive societal transformation.
- To empower students to become ambassadors of civil society and actively work towards reducing all forms of negative discrimination.

Practices

The following are some of the practices embraced by ZHDC in pursuit of the overarching goal of inclusivity.

- *For the Socioeconomic inclusion—*
    - Developing and implementing inclusive policies and guidelines can provide a strong framework for ensuring socioeconomic inclusion. This includes policies related to admissions, accommodations, anti-discrimination, and equal opportunities for all students. ZHDC upholds the principles of socioeconomic inclusion by following the reservation and positive discrimination regulations mandated by the law.
    - Scholarships are available for students belonging to socially and economically marginalised groups, and the Students Aid Committee of the college provides financial assistance to these students.
    - A book bank facility has been established by the College Library to allow students, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, to borrow books for the entire academic year. The Book Bank is the largest in the University of Delhi, with a rich collection of around 12000 books with yearly addition of around 500 books covering all the disciplines taught in the College.
    - The college also offers free medical counseling to students who cannot afford it otherwise.

- For the differently-abled students—
    - To ensure unimpeded access and easy navigation on campus, ZHDC has implemented various measures. These include installing ramps, lifts, signage, and providing wheelchairs for those in need.

Additionally, special toilets have been constructed to cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities to ensure hygiene.

- The administration offers scribes for examinations based on the type of disability and in accordance with statutory provisions.

- To enhance access to study materials and the library, the administration has provided a computer connected to a Lex Scanner for converting text to voice, along with headphones for visually challenged students. The library staff also assists visually challenged users by converting print materials into voice format using the Lex Scanner provided by the EQC of the University of Delhi.

- Visually challenged students are granted membership to the Delhi University Braille library, where they can access reading materials in Braille format and audio CDs.

- Students are provided with an Angel device, which aids visually challenged students in accessing written material. Moreover, visually challenged students are equipped with laptops installed with JAWS software for assistive reading.

- The college website is accessible and user-friendly for Divyangjan. Additionally, book catalogues and specific magazines like The *Touch*, *Gyanodaya*, and *Sparsh -Setu* are provided in Braille format to facilitate easy access for visually challenged students.

- ZHDC has an Enabling Unit called *Hum Honge Kamyab*, which focuses on the empowerment and inclusion of differently abled individuals. The society organizes an annual fest called '*Utsav*,' which commences with a motivational lecture and includes various inter-college competitions to provide a platform for differently abled students to showcase their talents to the larger student community. The Enabling Unit also raises awareness among youth about the daily challenges and needs of differently abled students, promoting a spirit of inclusivity and integration within the student community.

- *For the empowerment of women—*

- In 2021-22, as in all academic sessions, various departments at ZHDC offered a one percent relaxation in cutoff marks specifically for the female students during the admission process.

- A dedicated women's development cell is in place to address the concerns and needs of female students.

- ZHDC has established a girl's common room, providing a safe and private space that respects the privacy of female students.

- The Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) actively works towards resolving gender discrimination issues. In collaboration with the NGO Saheli, the ICC conducts orientation programs on gender discrimination rules and regulations. Eminent experts are also invited to deliver talks, disseminating information on gender-related laws and the ICC's role in addressing such matters.

- Recognizing the potential of ICT tools in empowering women educationally, economically, and socially, ZHDC has implemented a program focused on developing computing skills specifically for the female students.

- *For regional integration—*

- ZHDC acknowledges that regional integration is crucial for promoting harmony, peace, and contentment in a diverse society. To foster a deeper understanding and celebration of India's diversity, the college actively encourages and supports the formation of regional societies and formal/informal forums catering to the specific needs of students from different linguistic and cultural regions.

- The Northeast Students Counselling and Welfare Cell, dedicated to assisting students from the northeastern states of India, organizes the annual festival. The event celebrated the theme of national unity, emphasizing the sense of oneness and the spirit of cultural diversity, along with the values it fosters and nurtures.

Evidence of Success

We have been successfully able to organize/implement the following to ensure inclusivity in all the above domains.

- The Northeast Students' Counselling and Welfare Cell of ZHDC provided help in various forms, including financial, and counselled students coming from the region during the difficult times of the Pandemic. As the college reopened and physical assembly became possible, it organised its annual cultural fest on 25 April 2022. The occasion celebrated the theme of oneness and unity of the nation as well as the spirit of cultural diversity and the values it engenders and nurtures. Students from various colleges of Delhi University including from Hindu College, Jesus and Mary College, I. P. College, etc. enthusiastically participated in the competition sections of dance and folk songs. Prof. S. Somorendro Singh, Department of Physics and Astrophysics, University of Delhi and Prof. Shanta Laishram, Department of Mathematics, Indian Institute of Statistics, New Delhi graced the occasion as Chief Guest and Guest of Honour respectively.

- ICC organised POSH training sessions. The sessions were conducted by the ICC by Advocate Richa Tiwari for all stakeholders, including faculty, non-teaching staff, and students. The training covered various aspects such as understanding harassment, identifying what constitutes harassment, and gaining knowledge and awareness of rights, entitlements, and responsibilities enshrined in the constitution. ZHDC reaffirmed its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. The session also included a poster-making and slogan-writing competition, which was well attended. During the training, participants had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify their understanding of the role and responsibilities of the ICC in addressing harassment issues.

- A similar POSH training session was later conducted specifically for first-year students, as the semesters for second and third-year students were staggered. This session provided an interactive platform for students to gain clarity on the role of the ICC and its significance in promoting a safe and inclusive environment within the institution. Some harassment cases were amicably resolved through multiple discussions with the involved students. These cases primarily stemmed from misunderstandings between the parties. The ICC effectively addressed the cases by engaging in separate sessions with each party and facilitating a joint session to communicate resolutions.

- A lecture titled 'Secularism, Cow-Slaughter and Communalism in Modern India' was delivered by Dr Shabnum Tejani, SOAS, University of London on 9/07/2021

- The College Library houses a Book Bank. It renders services to the students by providing them with the text books (*Maximum 04*) of their choice for the whole academic session.

- For differently abled persons there is a ramp at the entrance of the College Library for the purpose of facilitating the access of physically challenged users in the library. VH and PH users are not required to wait in the queue for issue/return of the books. The Library staffs address the requirements of all such users on priority basis. There is one computer connected with Lex Scanner (*which converts text into voice*) and headphone meant for the use of VH students. The Library subscribes to 3 magazines in Braille format for the use of such users. If required, the Library staff helps visually challenged users by converting their print material into voice material using Lex Scanner provided by the EOC of the University of Delhi. Delhi University Braille Library Membership is also provided to the visually challenged students where they are provided with all their reading material both in Braille as well as audio format.

- Various scholarships/ fee concessions (including NSP, Scholarship to the blinds, e-district Delhi, Central Sanskrit University, WBO, PMSSS, other fee concessions) were offered to more than 500 students.

Problems encountered

• The administration is eager to introduce additional social outreach programs that provide students with practical experience in activities aimed at driving progressive social change. However, the successful execution of such programs relies heavily on the dedicated support from civil society organizations, the alumni network, and the civil administration. Without proactive assistance and backing from these entities, it becomes challenging for the college to effectively manage and carry out these initiatives.

• The aim of these practices is to cultivate students' sensitivity towards moral, social, and ethical issues, providing them with an opportunity to contemplate topics that are essential for societal development and acquainting them with fundamental principles of value judgment. The wholehearted participation of students from all departments is crucial for successfully achieving these goals. However, attaining these objectives can be challenging as it necessitates coordination and cooperation among all departments to agree upon a suitable time slot that does not conflict with their regular academic schedule. As a result, many students often face the dilemma of making trade-offs to participate in such events.

Resources Required

• Establishing partnerships with civil society organizations, alumni networks, and governmental bodies can provide additional resources, expertise, and support. Collaborating with these entities can help expand outreach programs, access specialized knowledge, and leverage external funding opportunities.

• Having dedicated personnel, such as counselors, advisors, and support staff, who are well-trained in addressing the needs of marginalized individuals, can significantly contribute to inclusivity efforts. These professionals can provide guidance, support, and advocacy for marginalized students.

Best Practice-2

Title:

Best Practice on Addressing Climate Change: Implementing Sustainable Measures in college campus

Context:

Climate change is a global challenge that requires urgent action to mitigate its adverse effects. Recognizing the significance of environmental sustainability, it is essential for educational institutions to incorporate best practices that promote awareness, conservation, and responsible environmental behavior. This best practice focuses on integrating sustainable measures into the Zakir Husain Delhi College's operations and curriculum to create a culture of environmental stewardship.

Objectives of the Practice:

1. Raise awareness and understanding of climate change and its impact among students, faculty, and staff.
2. Foster sustainable practices in the institution's operations, such as energy conservation, waste management, and water efficiency.
3. Incorporate climate change and environmental sustainability into the curriculum across various disciplines.
4. Encourage students and staff to actively participate in environmental initiatives and community engagement.
5. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the practice through evidence-based assessments.

The Practice:

Awareness and Education:

❖ ZHDC organized regular workshops, seminars, and campaigns through Department of Environmental Studies society "Parimandal" and Nature and Environment Society "Aranya" to educate the campus community about climate change, its causes, and potential solutions.
❖ Climate change and environmental sustainability topics are included into existing courses like AECC- Environmental Studies, Botany and Zoology and develop new courses dedicated to these subjects.

❖   Establish an eco-club or green committee to engage students in awareness-raising activities and projects.
❖   Promote sustainable practices through informational signage, digital platforms, and awareness campaigns.

Sustainable Operations:
❖ Conduct energy audits to identify energy-saving opportunities and implement energy-efficient technologies.
❖ Adopt renewable energy sources, such as solar panels or wind turbines, to reduce carbon emissions.
❖ Implement waste management practices, including recycling, composting, and reducing single-use plastic.
❖ Ensure efficient water use through leak detection, water-efficient fixtures.
❖ Encourage the use of sustainable transportation options like carpooling, cycling, or public transit.

Curriculum Integration:
❖ Infuse climate change and sustainability topics across various subjects, including science, social sciences, economics, and policy.
❖ Collaborate with faculty to develop interdisciplinary projects and research opportunities related to climate change.
❖ Encourage students to undertake capstone projects focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Evidence of Success:

1. Regular monitoring of energy consumption, water usage, waste reduction, and recycling rates.
2. Student and staff surveys and feedback to gauge awareness levels and engagement in sustainable practices.
3. Academic assessment of student learning outcomes related to climate change and environmental sustainability.
4. Recognition and awards from external sustainability organizations for the institution's environmental efforts.
5. Documentation of successful implementation of sustainable initiatives and their impact on reducing the institution's carbon footprint.

Problems Encountered:

1. Lack of awareness and resistance to change among students, faculty, and staff.

2. Insufficient financial resources for implementing sustainable infrastructure and technologies.
3. Limited faculty expertise and capacity to incorporate climate change into their respective disciplines.
4. Challenges in sustaining student participation and engagement in long-term environmental initiatives.
5. Need for partnerships with external organizations and stakeholders for knowledge sharing and funding opportunities.

Resources Required:

1. Funding for energy-efficient infrastructure upgrades and renewable energy installations.
2. Technical expertise and support for conducting energy audits and implementing sustainable practices.
3. Collaboration with environmental organizations, local governments, and industry partners for knowledge sharing and funding opportunities.
4. Regular training and professional development programs for faculty and staff to enhance their understanding of climate change and sustainable practices.
5. Communication tools and platforms for promoting awareness campaigns and engaging the campus community.

Conclusion:

By adopting these best practices, educational institutions can effectively contribute to addressing climate change challenges. The integration of climate change education, sustainable campus initiatives, research and innovation, community engagement, and strong institutional governance will collectively foster a culture of environmental consciousness, enabling us to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change while nurturing a sustainable future for generations to come.Implementing this best practice will contribute to the institution's commitment to environmental sustainability and equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the challenges posed by climate change. By integrating sustainable measures into operations and curriculum