

Best Practice – II

1. Title of the Practice: Employment Enhancement Programme (EEP)

2. Objective of the Practice:

The New College considers preparing students for employment as one of the main goals of tertiary level education. With this objective, the college engages in a series of career orientation, skill training and personality enrichment activities to strengthen the students' employability, right from the *Deeksharambh - Student Induction Programme (SIP)*. As the college believes that the best time to start a career is immediately after completing the UG degree, right from the first semester, students are oriented towards selecting their career path. All these efforts aim at enhancing the readiness of students for a career by the time they graduate. The other objectives of the practice include:

- Offering Employability Skills course to all the UG and PG students.
- Enhanced focus on communication skills.
- Providing training for employability.
- Conducting tests for interview, presentation, resume writing, and group discussion.
- Engaging students in various skill development activities.
- Promoting internships, field work, and field visits.

3. The Context:

Employability is a matter of grave concern for today's graduates. Colleges across the country have been facing the challenge of making all its graduates employable by developing transferable skills, life skills and employability skills. In spite of their impressive performance in their studies, many graduates find it difficult to get hired in campus interviews and in other employment examinations. In this scenario, the college realised the absence of a system to address the problem of employability in a structured manner. Moreover, the existence of a disconnection between the academic attainments and the employability of students is found to be a matter of concern. The college utilised its Autonomy to address this problem by introducing a compulsory two-part course in Employability Skills from 2017-18 academic year, which stands out as one of the best practices in the college. The Employability Skills course was introduced as a common course under Part IV of all UG programmes. The course necessitated training the students in basic skills like interview techniques, presentations, resume writing, and group discussion, needed to excel in job interviews and aptitude tests. The Department of English was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the course and conducting related training programmes and practical examinations.

4. The Practice:

As The New College believes in starting to orient students towards their career as early as the first semester, the Employability Skills course was introduced in the first two semesters. The course was designed as a skills-based course, and it is imparted following the principles of activity-oriented teaching. The course covers such aspects as planning for career, developing essential interpersonal and soft skills, developing technical competency, preparing for aptitude tests, interview and group discussion skills, understanding the expectations of the employers in the changing times, and preparing for campus placement. The college developed its own textbook for teaching employability skills, keeping in mind the specific requirements of the types of students admitted in the college. The textbook included information sections, classroom activities, and QR code links for further self study. The responsibility of teaching this course has been entrusted to the Department of English. The syllabus and the book used to teach the course was periodically updated to address the employability requirements of the changing times. The course has two assessment methods - i) practical viva voce (oral) examination involving interview skills, test of communication skills, resume writing and presenting, and Group discussion; and ii) end semester written examination.

In addition to the regular classroom training, the Department of English conducted Employability training programmes for the benefit of all the first year UG students to train them for the basic skills needed to succeed in Employment tests and interviews.

5. Evidence of Success:

The first batch that received the Employability Skills course completed their UG programme during the 2019-20 academic year. The batch witnessed tremendous improvements in the campus placements in general and the number of students appearing for campus placement drives, in particular. **244** placement offers were secured by the students of this batch, and **428** students from the batch pursued higher education for enhancing their career prospects. The same trend was witnessed the next academic year (2020-21), as well. The general outcome of the course included making all students learn to plan their career, prepare their own resumes, acquire the necessary informatics skills to apply for jobs online, and prepare themselves for online aptitude tests, interviews and group discussion. The course also resulted in introducing students to various online resources like online tests, and online courses. The course enhanced online certifications and enrolment of students to various online courses.

The orientation towards employability also resulted in enhancing the number of students taking up field projects and internships. 2356 Students completed internships, field

projects and student projects in the academic year 2020-21 as a result of the awareness on on-the-job training created by the course.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

The initial difficulties in implementing the programme included training the teachers to deliver the lessons following activity-oriented teaching methods. This was overcome by conducting a series of informal interactive meetings with the teachers in the presence of the author of the book to discuss the methodology followed in teaching the course. Another important challenge was updating the syllabus and course material every year, considering the fact that frequent changes take place in the employment scenario in general and the skill expectations of employers in the emerging times, in particular. The problem was resolved by bringing out fresh editions of the book with additions and modifications. Providing internship opportunities to all the students was also found challenging. The college is in the process of developing more industry interactions through MoUs to provide internship opportunities to all the students.

7. Notes

As the college enjoys the locational advantage of being in a metropolitan city with hundreds of MNCs and other potential recruiters, the course enabled the college to invite more recruiters to select its students. The years after the introduction of the course witnessed enhancement in the number of companies visiting the campus. The use of various online resources also enabled the students to face online tests and online placement interviews. The college has revised the syllabus for Employability Skills in 2020-21, incorporating some of the skills needed for career success in the post-pandemic scenario.