

Best Practices at Higher Education Institutions: A Case Study of SJR College for Women, Bengaluru

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Abstract – Best practices are a set of guidelines, ethics or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action. Best practices are often set forth by an authority, such as a governing body or management, depending on the circumstances. , SJRCW is making a small contribution to the higher education system through a set of its best practices, by creating awareness about our culture, heritage and traditional practices among young students by inculcating the habit of charity in students. This research paper is based on both primary & secondary source data, taken from various newspaper articles, reports, journals and magazines. The main conclusion of this paper is to highlight the various aids that an educational institution can stretch to its students through a set of best practices.

Key Words: Best Practices, Educational Intuition, Students, Society.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a prime role in this modern world. In today's world education has become the most important aspect. "Being educated is the biggest asset". To create such assets are the biggest challenges for educational institutions through its best practices.

Best practices are a set of guidelines, ethics or ideas that represent the most efficient or prudent course of action. Best practices are often set forth by an authority, such as a governing body or management, depending on the circumstances. While best practices generally command the recommended course of action, some situations require that industry best practices be followed. The term "best practices" has been used to describe "what works" in a particular situation or environment.

The major concern of education is to develop the good, the true and the divine in man. so as to establish a moral life in the world. It should essentially make a man pious, perfect and truthful. The welfare of humanity lies neither in scientific or technological advancements nor in acquisition of material comforts. The main purpose of education is to enrich the character. What we need today more than anything else is moral leadership founded on courage, intellectual integrity and a sense of values.

The best thing about education system in India is that it prepares the foundation of a child's education very neatly by giving equal importance to the basics of all subjects in the early stages of education. The present education system has changed from conventional method to ICT. The impact of technology in life as well as in education system has changed the face of education system in India. Earlier the career options for students were limited, now the students have a wide & vast field ahead of them to explore in any subject they feel like. Since education is a powerful instrument of social change and human progress, it is also a powerful tool to cultivate values in an individual. Therefore, all the educational institutions have greater responsibility to impart learning and cultivation of values through education among the present generation. In this regard, SJRCW is making a small contribution to the higher education system through a set of its best practices, by creating awareness about our culture, heritage and traditional practices among young students by inculcating the habit of charity in students. Because, **THE CHARITY ALWAYS BEGINS AT HOME.**

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of the study is, To evaluate the various best practices followed in the institution

and introspect its Principles and Concepts and also its Evidence of Success.

METHODOLOGY:

This research paper is mainly prepared by analysing the various newspaper articles, papers and write ups and also IQAC, SSR reports of the college. The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

SJR College for Women located centrally at the Rajajinagar entrance is a landmark building with a reckoning tradition of 25 years. It is a well-known institution in Bengaluru that has been serving to empower women students and enable them to acquire skills for a better future. The college has a healthy mix of all classes and categories and caters to the educational needs of young women at an affordable cost. Established in the year 1988 by SJR Educational Society (**SJRES**) as a PU College, the foundation stone was laid in 1990 for the degree college. Since then the college has come a long way to celebrate its Silver Jubilee in the year 2015. The college has walked many a miles, built brick by brick as envisioned by the former President Prof. M.Shadaksharaswamy-an academician and administrator par excellence. Late Prof. Sharadamma, Founder Principal and Director of Studies had been the guiding force whose spirit of service is upheld in all the activities of the College even today.

The hallmarks of SJRCW are loyalty and whole-hearted commitment to the mission of moulding and building the capacities of young women. This college has enabled its students to distinguish themselves in various fields of Humanities, Commerce & Science. SJRCW is affiliated to Bangalore University and is recognized by UGC, under section 2(f) and 12(B) in the year 2002. Among the various best practices of SJRCW, two most prominent ones are:

- **RENUKA RANGA**
- **RENUKA DATTI**

Best Practice – I

RENUKA RANGA

Title: Students' Performing Arts Unit

Goal: Following are the aims of **Renuka Ranga**:

- To train students in skills related to performing arts like, dance, drama and music.
- To build leadership qualities through inter and intra personal skills among students.

- To impact society through social messages, conveyed by their performances.
- To produce plays on contemporary issues and educate community through them.
- To enable students to find employment opportunities in performing arts and cultural fields.
- To preserve and protect the regional and folk culture, tradition and literature.

Principles and Concepts:

Performing arts are a confluence of various forms of culture and tradition, which arouse navarasas (9 emotions) in the onlookers who witness the performances. Thus, dance, music and drama performances aim at bringing out the emotionality that engulfs the common humanity. Training in performing arts broadens the horizon of the higher education beyond the precincts of the college into a larger world.

The Context:

To create awareness about the folk songs, folk dance forms and theatre among the youth, who are being carried away by the influence of television, internet, western culture and globalization. The need to counter the passive forms of entertainment like television, invigorating the existing folk-art forms and theatre was very essential.

The availability of an open-air theatre, the spacious state of the art Lalitamma Channabasappa Auditorium coupled with generous support of the management to conduct workshops and productions are an added advantage. The association with organisations like, Kannada and Culture Department, Karnataka Folk Academy, Karnataka Janapada Parishath, Ranga samsthana and Sanchari Theatre has been opportune moments to initiate **Renuka Ranga** in the college. Since 2009, three workshops in folk song training, two workshops in theatre training, and two workshops in training Kamsale –a folk dance form (**pronounced as kumsaali - an art form of Karnataka**) have been conducted. About 16 performances have been staged within and outside the college. Performances during the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the College were a proud moment to reckon.

The Practice:

The cultural forum – '**Sanskrit**' and the Language Club- **Uttunga** (Kannada) make announcements of the upcoming workshops. The debut of a student into theatre/ Kamsale/ folksong training begins with the enrolment for the workshop. A director or

trainer having considerable experience is invited to conduct the month-long workshop. The training is residential in nature and a nominal fee is charged per student. The convener of **Renuka Ranga** and few other faculty shoulder the tasks like fixing the shows, making schedules, managing the event, etc, the batch of students are trained during the time slots provided. In about three to four weeks' time the aspirants are trained and performance readied. The services of costume designers, make-up artists and musicians are hired, who also train the students in those specialized fields. A day before the stage show, dress rehearsals are conducted. The workshop formally concludes with a premiere attended by a good number of students, parents and the public. Honorarium to the Director/Trainer, the backstage assistants, the light and sound technicians are paid from the nominal fees collected from the students, and the funds allocated by the management. The troupe of trainees gets opportunity to stage shows in the college annual day, literary meets and inter college competitions. Looking at the learning outcome, the performing arts training/activities not only teach students the performing skills, stage design, backstage work and music but also, team work, leadership, interpersonal skills, enhanced learning abilities, event management and socializing skills. The students of **Renuka Ranga** are felicitated every year on college day as recognition for their skills and efforts.

Evidence of Success:

RenukaRanga- students' Performing Arts unit has drawn considerable attention of the public in Karnataka. Media also has given exclusive coverage from time to time. 150 students of SJRCW who were trained in folksongs have performed in an event organised by 'Rangasansthana' and have made it to the **Limca Book of World Records**. The students of theatre performance have participated in inter-college drama competition and **Kum. Meghashree R has received the best Actor's award from 'Rangotri'**. The Kamsale team every year has won **1st and 2nd prize** in the intercollege competitions. The **Renuka Ranga** team has won about **12 shields** in various competitions organised by several institutions. The students have also taken part successfully in the state level '**Folk Arts Congress**' and performed '**Pata Kunita**', '**Pooja Kunita**', '**Nandi dhwa Kunita**' and '**Kamsale**'. The cultural worth of **Renuka Ranga**, especially for the younger generation seen in the context of its social acceptance is incredible.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

In the first place, student enrolment was a bigger challenge. To overcome this, the faculty involved in Performing Arts movement had to sensitize and motivate the students for enrolment. Once the activities were started, they drew attention of the students who wanted to enrol. The organizational skills of the faculty and the successful stage

performances resulted in the increase in student enrolment. Paucity of financial resources was also a cause of concern, but with the success rate the management, alumni and philanthropists have come forward to fund the activities. Today **Renuka Ranga** is synonymous with the colour and fervour it has added to SJRCW campus.

Best Practice – II

RENUKA DATTI

Title: Student Welfare Fund

Goal: Following are the aims of **Renuka Datti**:

- To instil the quality of charity in students and staff.
- To meet the primary requirements of economically weaker students of the college.
- To financially assist students as a part of social responsibility of the institution.
- To provide food coupons to the needy students.

Principles and Concepts:

Philanthropy is an integral part of the growing society. So, it becomes important to each individual to inculcate this quality. Charity done even in a small way goes on to make a greater impact in the lives of people who really need it. Thus, a small step is taken by the institution towards Philanthropy.

The Context:

It has been observed that the institution has students who are financially very weak. These students find it very difficult to even pay their examination fees. The institution supports students with scholarships who are academically good. The students who are economically weak and not exceptionally good at academics cannot avail the benefits of scholarships given by various organisations. **Renuka Datti** makes a small effort by paying their examination fees.

The Practice:

The Student Welfare Committee-'Samhitha' takes the responsibility of '**Renuka Datti**'. The committee sends a circular to students and staff to voluntarily contribute to '**Renuka Datti**'. The amount pooled from the students will be handed over to the student's welfare committee through the class teachers. The collected amount is deposited in to the account maintained for '**Renuka Datti**'. Later, the committee members identify the needy

students with the help of class teachers /mentors. A set procedure is followed in finalising the students for the assistance and assist them in paying their examination fees. Some students are provided with food coupons. The names of the benefited students are kept confidential.

Evidence of Success:

This best practice of the institution has attracted the attention of the students. As the number of applications received from the students has increased over the years. The amount that has contributed by the staff & students has also increased. Any amount which is saved, collected from conducting the examinations for other organisations Viz KPSC, Railway boards, ESI, Banking Examination Boards, K-SET etc. is remitted to **Renuka Datti**. Funds are also pooled through training programmes conducted by ED cell, & students-welfare committee.

Students are benefited from this fund in various ways. A few students who could not have their two meals a day are provided with food coupons, which they can redeem in college canteen & a few have completed their graduation by receiving the amount from this fund for the payment of their university examination fees.

A record is being maintained for the expenditure of '**Renuka Datti**'. A register is also maintained where in the class representative sign is after handing over the collected money. Signatures are also taken from students who avail the financial assistance. Since the inception of '**Renuka Datti**' many students are financially benefitted.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

The fund that comes to '**Renuka Datti**' is a voluntary contribution made by students and staff members. There are no specific limitations for the amount donated. Therefore, the fund is not sufficient to cater to all the financial needs of the students. With the collected fund, '**Renuka Datti**' can assist students by paying their examination fees only.

CONCLUSION:

On the outset, Best practices need more practical and practicing approach, than just stating. Each successful practice is described using a standard roaster covering, content, objectives, description, methods, results, level of satisfaction, external view, investments, experience, boundary conditions & future plans. Providing emotional & financial support. the success & practice of any best practice in the educational institution depends up on the selection of the best feasible & assessable ideas. The all-round personality of the students cannot be developed alone between the four walls of the class rooms; it

also requires a set of live examples, the practice of good set of morals, ethics & principles from the surrounding environmental factors & policy makers.

Along with the above, any set of practices are subjected, to the joint participation of the entire stakeholder's viz., support from the Management, commitment from staff members, participation from students, encouragement from parents and availability of resources because "**Organisations are the reflection of the society**".

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