

Best Practice I

Ethiraj Outreach Program

1. Title of the Practice

EthIgnite – Campus to Community

2. Objectives of the Practice

- TIP – Theory to Practice: To create ample opportunities for students to translate learning into service
- C2C - Campus to Community: To contribute to the nation's development through effective sharing of knowledge
- Promote harmony, develop tolerance, and inculcate values in young minds
- Aathmanirbharatha: To inculcate the spirit of self-reliance through service

3. The Context

Ethiraj College for Women follows a **Praxis-based Approach** to advocate the importance of community engagement. The goal of the outreach programs of the college is to sensitise students to the needs of society and their role in nation-building. It provides students with a grassroots introduction to rural Indian communities while also teaching them about the difficulties that rural areas experience. In order to inspire, motivate, and educate them on self-reliance through service special emphasis was laid on outreach activities.

In the fast-pacing world, the underprivileged community and people in the rural areas are finding it difficult to cope with the digital changes and lifestyle stress. As an institution with social responsibility Ethiraj College gives back to the community through its student body and faculty.

4. The Practice

Community service is an integral component of the academic programmes offered by the college. One credit is awarded to the student for their contribution to the extension clubs.

In October 2017, the college **adopted two villages**, Nemilicherry and Karunakaracherry on the outskirts of Chennai to improve the living conditions of the people in the village. The Department of Economics organised a Socio-Economic Survey to ascertain the needs of the villagers and understand the demographics.

The college reaches out through activities organised by the departments and extension clubs. Every year theme-based projects are planned and executed by the units. The outreach programmes at Ethiraj are channelised through eight different verticals:

- Education - Students offer **literacy programmes** in schools and in the village. English, Mathematics and Science are taught through fun games. They organise events and competitions to **complement the students' classroom learning**.
- Health and Hygiene – the students of the college participate in rallies organised by NGOs and other institutions. They arrange awareness camps, sensitisation programmes through street plays, mimes, human chains, poster making on cancer, menstrual hygiene, tuberculosis, leprosy, general wellbeing, good eating habits, organ and blood donation and so on in the community and in the adopted village. **Nutrition-**

consciousness promoting **FIT India Movement** has been organised in the adopted village. Yoga camps and sports activities have also been organised in the schools.

- Entrepreneurial Development – Students of the Business Studies stream offer **skill training** and teach **business strategies** to women in the community and in the village. The activities of Enactus and E-Cell directly promote entrepreneurial development. The women in the community have a regular source of income through the ventures started with the help of our students.
- Environmental Consciousness – Swacch Ethiraj in line with **Swacch Bharat Abhiyan** promotes eco-consciousness, cleanliness and sanitation in the community and in the adopted village. Tree plantation drives, sensitisation on rainwater harvesting and the ban of single-use plastic on the campus and in the community is encouraged by the student bodies.
- Gender – **Gender sensitisation** camps, awareness programmes on the constitutional rights of women, women's health, women entrepreneurs, women and family, and empowerment of women through literacy are organised by the clubs.
- Constitutional Rights – The college students organise several awareness programmes on **constitutional provisions** for women and the rural people. In the bargain, they also explore all the schemes available through the government and other agencies and educate the community.
- Digital Literacy – The students contribute towards the **Digital India Mission** by teaching their peers, and the community computer literacy, use of mobile banking, IVRS Bookings, using government portals, e-payments and so on. They compose marketing messages for vendors to sell their daily wares.
- As a result of the training given by our students, the vendors in the vicinity of the college have adopted e-payments and are marching toward **cashless India**.
- Promotion of Indian Values – Students of the college organise cultural events and competitions in the community schools on special days to promote **Indian values and social ethics**. The cultural bonanza engaging the community creates camaraderie and tolerance beyond caste, colour, and creed.

5. Evidence of Success

Development practices that are reflexive, and socially useful, were undertaken by the departments and extension clubs:

- **RO Water Plants** were installed in the adopted villages at the cost of Rs.1,65,000.
- Health Camps, **Dental Care Programmes** and Awareness Drives were organised.
- **Breast Cancer Screening** in association with Adyar Cancer Institute.
- In association with Bohra Eye Hospital
 - **Eye Screening** and **distribution of spectacles**
 - Arrangements for **Cataract Surgery**. An amount upto Rs.1,00,000 was subsidised by Bohra Eye Hospital for this.
- **Sports Day** in the community schools.
- Supply of **Stationery** in schools.
- **Activity-based Learning** session for the students of Government Higher Secondary School at Nemilichery on personal hygiene, safety rules and sensitized the kids to the difference between good and bad touch through charts, models and activities.

- **Saplings** of Almond, Peepal, Black Plum, Portia (Poovarasu) and few other tropical varieties were planted by the Green Activists of the League.
- **Iron tree guards** bearing the name of the college were fenced around the newly planted saplings to ensure proper nurturing and safety of the trees.
- Programme was held at Nemilichery village for primary school students to spread awareness on **common microbial infections and sanitation process**.
- **Skit** on disease and sanitation in Nemilichery village
- Student volunteers visited **Government Crèche Bhalvaadi** on the 12th of March, 2020 sang rhymes and interacted with the children.
- Students arranged a **Mock Panchayat** under the supervision of the Village Head and discussed pollution, plastic awareness, afforestation, the Corona disease, personal health and hygiene, etc.
- Distribution of **handmade cloth bags** to the people to encourage the usage of cloth bags instead of plastic bags.
- **Painted the compound wall** of the Government school with messages promoting values, ethics, environmental consciousness and communal tolerance.
- Visit to Karunakaracheri, the adopted village of the College and educated the villagers on **disasters and their mitigation**.
- A nutrition education programme on the topic “**Arokiyam and Nalvazhvu**” was conducted for primary government school children in Nemilicheri - a village adopted by Ethiraj College for Women on 4th March, 2019.
- Around 97 students from Class I to V were educated on **healthy eating habits**, sanitation, hygiene and importance of exercise through Street play and skit.
- Educated the school children by the **play way method** through question-and-answer session, songs, rhymes and proverbs.
- Demonstration on the **Pros and Cons of Social Media** to the Villagers
- **Walk for Plastics** on 6th February 2020 for collecting littered recyclable plastics from the roads in and around the College campus. Over 200 student volunteers and faculty members actively participated in this activity and collected around 55 kgs of recyclable plastics and handed it over to the recyclers.
- Awareness programme on the hazards of using plastics and on ways to prevent littering of plastics on roads
- Session on **Baking and Confectionery, Interior Decoration and Housekeeping**
- **Mushroom Cultivation and Microgreens** on the college campus are maintained by women from the community.
- Skills that will translate into a **business model with low capital** like Cosmetology, Silk thread Jewellery, Fabric painting, Aari work, Canvas painting, Tie and dye, Pattern sewing, Glass Painting, Liquid Embroidery, Baking, Beautician and so on were taught through E-Square, Enactus, Rotaract as outreach programmes.

MoUs that equip students to serve the community

- Ministry of Human Resources and Development
- Bharatiya Yuva Shakthi Trust (BYST)
- Confederation of Indian Industry & Young Indians
- External linkage with Beta Monks Pvt. Ltd.

Entrepreneurial Outreach activities are showcased through stalls set up by differently-abled, NGOs and the women community in the student cultural festivals EthI Bandhan Bazaar, Aarambh, Maithri, and Srishti.

The institution promotes inclusivity in all its ventures, at ED Bazaar and Eco Bazaar budding **differently-abled entrepreneurs from NGOs** are invited to display and sell their wares. They generate income ranging from Rs.50 to Rs.1,000 by the sale of trading, service, and self-made products.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- During the pandemic several contacts with the community and schools were disrupted interrupting the continuity of the programmes.
- Mobilising funds for investment in development projects in the village.
- Quantitative assessment of the efficacy of the outreach programs is difficult.
- Implementation of the practice requires active collaboration with external agencies, which face a few bottlenecks.

7. Notes

Students' engagement in outreach activities develops their personality and increases their participation in community development. EthIgnite creates self-reliant women ready to challenge customary roles and conditioning. We as an institution have turned every stone to make our women students self-sufficient and proactive in creating a community where we live to help each other. Underlying the outreach programmes at Ethiraj is the principle of win-win where collaboration, consultation and contribution form the bedrock of self-sufficiency and community-living.

Best Practice II

Ethi Shakthi

1. Title of the Practice

Ethi Shakthi – Students League

2. Objectives of the Practice

The **POWER** of Ethi Shakthi

- Presence – Alertness to the needs of the self and fellow students
- Ownership - Develop a sense of belongingness to the institution
- Wisdom – Capacity for critical thinking and decision-making
- Equanimity – Build emotional intelligence and people skills
- Responsibility - Shoulder responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the performance of the institution

3. The Context

The vision of the college is to develop young women into socially responsible citizens with well-developed personalities and global outlooks. Along with the academic and extracurricular activities that aim to fulfill the vision and mission, participatory management at the student level ensures the attainment of **SDG 5** of the UN. The college's students' Union, a democratically elected body, represents the students in various fora of campus life. The Union coordinates the participation of students in extracurricular activities. It organizes and conducts co-curricular and cultural events at the inter-departmental and national levels and coordinates the participation of the students in the competitions held by other institutions at the district, state, and national levels. To observe the **125th birth centenary celebrations** of the founder and to commemorate his vision of women's empowerment Ethi Shakthi, a new student initiative was launched on **18.03.2016**. Ethi Shakthi, a group of Eight student leagues was formed to include students in the day-to-day administration of the college thereby, providing an opportunity to develop their organisational and leadership skills. The motto of Ethi Shakthi is "**Impress, Influence, Inspire**".

4. The Practice

Unleashing the feminine principle "**Shakthi**", the students' league is a creative force that drives the internal mechanism of most student-related activities. The objective of Ethi Shakthi is to involve student leaders in the administration of the college. The involvement and commitment of the students, as significant stakeholders, of the institution, create a distinctive culture. The strength of the league lies in its potential to tap the innate capabilities of young women. They aim to create young, responsible, and efficient future leaders at regional, national and global levels.

Ethi Shakthi constitutes eight leagues:

- Swachh Ethiraj
- Alumnae Connect
- Campus Innovations
- Disaster Mitigation
- Green Enviro

- Holistic Well-Being
- Social Works
- Website league

The leagues comprise student leaders from various disciplines guided by a faculty coordinator. Each league takes on at least two projects each semester. These students' initiatives ensure 100 percent involvement of the students from planning to execution. This instills a sense of responsibility among students, develops values and ethics and promotes camaraderie and the joy of shared accomplishments.

5. Evidence of Success

- Regular checking of washrooms and inspection of campus cleanliness - **Improved cleanliness on campus**
- Classroom beautification and awareness posters
- Solid Waste Management, Vermi Compost, Biogas
- Ban on single-use plastic
- **Eco-Friendly alternatives:** Paper Bags, Sanitary Napkin Disposal Cover
- **Plant a Tree Movement** - Greener Campus
- Coordinate **Ethi Bandhan**, the Alumnae Meet
- Update the **Alumna Directory**
- Liaise with the alumna to invite them as resource persons and event guest
- **Stars of the Month** Initiative on the college website
- Timely update of the website with enhanced data collection of events
- A regular check of fire extinguishers and fire drills
- **Charity Thursday** – Generating funds through innovative means
- **Jogathon** to promote the idea of outdoor activities to help improve health and fitness
- **Yoga for All, Yogamana Vazhvuku Yoga, Yoga Mudras for Health**
- **“Wootasathu”** project for Ethiraj College canteens to promote wholesome and nutritious Food and restrict/limit the availability of foods rich in HFSS.
- The project on **“Kootan Choru”** was implemented through educative posters on healthy eating habits for hostel students.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- Training students every academic year to don new roles is difficult.
- Continuing a project begun by a set of students after they leave as new students want to innovate
- Requires constant monitoring from faculty to bridge the experience gap
- Time Management, tackling academic, extracurricular and leadership roles is at times stressful for the students

7. Notes

Institutions grow when their stakeholders contribute 100 percent. The student body which forms the core of an educational institution should be accountable and feel part and parcel of the institution's growth and development. Initiatives like Ethhi Shakthi help finding equilibrium and celebrate the infinite potential of women power.