

## **7.2.1 BEST PRACTICES OF RANCHI WOMEN'S COLLEGE**

### **ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21**

#### **BEST PRACTICE – I**

##### **1. Title of the Practice**

Supporting the continuation of teaching and strengthening Technology-enabled learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic

##### **2. Objectives of the Practice**

To develop effective online teaching mechanism and facilitate the rapid design and implementation of adaptive responses to the education challenges posed by Covid-19 lockdown.

##### **3. The Context**

The COVID-19 crisis forced education systems to find alternatives to face-to-face instruction. Ranchi University, through an official notification shut down the colleges in March 2020 followed by the Government order. Hence, there was a need to find an alternative to face-to-instruction and find out ways in which existing resources of the college could be utilized in effectively transforming formal education into online education with the help of virtual classes and other pivotal online tools.

##### **4. The Practice**

Post the lockdown imposed by the Government, the educational institutions shifted from the offline teaching mode to the online teaching-learning mode. The Council discussed and explored all possible aspects of online teaching and their viability. Meetings of the faculty members were held immediately to take into account the peculiar requirements of the teaching-learning in different papers and to maintain uniformity across different classes. The following steps were immediately taken to gain control over the disruption caused by the pandemic.

- a) Teachers were required to ensure their availability for their students through WhatsApp/email.
- b) Class/subject wise WhatsApp groups were created to address the specific needs of the students.
- c) Teachers were required to upload video lectures on the Youtube Channel of Radio Khanchi, a community radio station of Ranchi University and links were shared with the students in the larger interest.

- d) Teachers started taking online classes through Zoom, Google Meet, or other suitable platforms in consultation with the class representatives.
- e) Online workshops were conducted to provide teachers with not only improved pedagogical practices such as working on google forms, how to use the teaching app for online assessments, but also with the emotional support they needed during this time by understanding their position and catering to their educational needs.

When the pandemic situation showed little respite, the College adopted a uniform teaching app “Teachmint” across all departments. This teaching app helped to streamline processes and manage classes effortlessly. It was important to choose an app that best fitted our requirements. Live class recording, automated attendance, online tests, online whiteboard, live polls to increase student engagement, sharing study materials were such important features of the app that made online teaching-learning even more effective.

### **5. Evidence of Success**

a) *Timely Completion of course:* Our teachers, staff and students showed exemplary willingness to be part of this transitional phase. The courses were completed well in time. Online interaction was successful in replacing face-to-face interaction. Teachers and students learnt to advance the teaching-learning process through online mode on diverse platforms. WhatsApp groups became live forums of discussion and problem solving. Google forms, google class room, Zoom, Webex etc. were used as platforms for class discussions, conducting webinars and other activities.

b) *Student Counselling:* They were not only used for sharing course related material but also became forums for influencing students’ attitudes and disposition through emotional support and maximizing their ability to make the most of online learning opportunities.

c) *Effective communication between administration and teaching staff:* Faculty members and members from the administrative wing joined an official whatsapp group that was used for sharing all important information regarding mid-sem exams, fee submission, evaluation, holidays, payment of salaries etc. Effective communication led to smooth and timely work in the college.

d) *Increased participation in online courses/webinars by students and faculty:* Amid Covid-19 crisis, teachers incorporated technology effectively into their teaching practices and methods and students also showed an increased willingness to overcome the difficulties that were associated with this form of learning environment. However, with the extensive use of digital resources for pedagogical practice, both teacher and students effectively leveraged ICT in order to participate in workshops/seminars on online platform.

## **6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

We have a good number of students from remote corners of Jharkhand and adjoining states where internet connectivity is inadequate and electricity supplies are erratic. Possessing digital equipment for online teaching-learning was a challenge in some cases. Economic condition of some students was not conducive to this switchover. Resources aligned to the online/blended mode were required. Also, due to surge in the number of Covid cases around August-September 2020 and again in April-May 2021, when active cases of Covid-19 were found in almost every family, many students could not attend online classes on a regular basis. However, the recorded video lectures came to their rescue. Also mid-semester examinations were conducted 3-4 times to ensure that all students appeared in the exams. This was challenging for the faculty members.

## **7. Notes**

The transition from the conventional face-to-face instruction to online teaching-learning mechanism was smooth due to unparalleled support and willing acceptance of change among students and faculty alike. Despite the challenges faced during the Covid times, the institution tried its best to address the issues faced by students. Keeping into account the financial crisis that many families had to go through during the pandemic, the college adopted a liberal policy in fee collection. The students were allowed to pay their tuition fees in small installments during the lockdown.

## **BEST PRACTICE – II**

### **1. Title of the Practice**

Mentoring during the Covid-19 Pandemic

### **2. Objectives of the Practice**

To offer support, guidance, encouragement and assistance to mentees (students) while they endeavour to navigate through difficulties, face challenges during Covid-19. To reduce uncertainty of the future and support the mental health of the students during the testing times.

### **The Context**

The coronavirus outbreak left many of us feeling frightened, worried and overwhelmed. Quality mentoring programs became more necessary than ever especially for college students who are at a stage in life wherein they face a host of problems related to academics, relationships, health, stress, finance, employment concerns etc. Due to varied reasons, students often do not confide their problems to anyone, which could lead to emotional imbalance, disheartenment and

frustration. This can be fixed through mentoring whereby the students are provided with academic and emotional support. Through their encouragement and guidance, mentors play an important role in nurturing the mentees' aspirations, preparing them for future challenges, building confidence in them, motivating them to undertake challenges and promoting their all-round development.

### **3. The Practice**

The mentor-mentee scheme adopted by our college has the following features:

- i) Each faculty member is assigned with the task of mentoring a few students of his/her own department.
- ii) The mentor interacts with the mentees once every alternate week. During the formal interactions, topics like code of conduct, dress code, punctuality, attendance, examination preparation, non-tolerance of ragging, non-acceptance of adopting unfair means at examinations, sexual harassment at workplace, suicidal tendencies, cyber crime, choice of careers, conservation of water and energy, confidence-building activities etc, are discussed.
- iii) Mentees are required to furnish a detailed personal profile listing their contact details, personal strengths and weaknesses, etc. for mentor's reference.
- iv) Mentees are encouraged to reach out to their mentors and discuss their concerns.
- v) Mentors keep a record of the academic performance of the mentees and provide the necessary assistance/guidance for improving their grades.
- vi) At the end of each academic year, mentees are supposed to provide their feedback on the various topics discussed during the formal interactions. Their suggestions are utilized, wherever possible, to improve the programme.

### **4. Evidence of success**

The following are indicators of the programmes' success:

- i) Lack of physical interactions during Covid times often left the students disconnected with their peers but the mentorship programme went a long way in retaining their engagement in the college activities.
- ii) The campus is litter-free. Garbage bins, placed at strategic spots, are used by students/mentees as per directions leading, also, to dry and wet waste segregation.
- iii) Students have displayed a responsible behavior and take initiative to turn/switch off taps, lights and fans when not in use.
- iv) Campus discipline has tremendously improved.
- v) Student behaviour, self-esteem and confidence have shown substantial improvement.
- vi) Academic performance has improved.
- vii) Health consciousness of students has improved.

- viii) Rare cases of unethical practices during examinations are reported.
- ix) Increased participation in co-curricular activities even during Covid-19 pandemic.
- x) Stronger relationships have shaped up amongst students/peers, faculty and parents.

## **5. Problems encountered and Resources required**

The programme faced the following challenges:

- i) Due to covid-19 imposed lockdown, the mentoring sessions could not be scheduled in a timely manner across all departments. However, the feedback from students shows that the mentors were available round the clock for counseling and personal guidance of the mentees.
- ii) We are yet to develop external assessment of the internal mentoring process, and criteria suitable for evaluation.
- iii) The busy schedules and academic pre-occupations of the faculty makes it mentally taxing for them to devote additional time to the mentees.

## **6. Notes**

The mentor-mentee scheme gained importance during the Covid-19 crisis due to the absence of peer interaction among students, uncertainty around completion of courses, placement and other such concerns arising during the lockdown. However, the mentees enthusiastically participated due to the informal interaction, additional attention, motivation and support arising from the programme even during the lockdown. The mentors played a proactive role in the programme's implementation and personally invested in the mentee's professional and personal growth.