

## **BEST PRACTICES**

### **Best Practice 1:**

#### **1. Title of the Practice: SOCIAL SCIENCE FORUM**

**2. Goal:** To sensitise the students pursuing B.A. Programmes in Economics, History, and Political Science about current social issues and the need to cross disciplinary boundaries to understand complex social reality through developing an interdisciplinary research aptitude in them.

**3. Context:** The present B.A. Programmes undertaken by the students conceive the relevant disciplines as watertight compartments and leave minimal space for integration of those disciplines. In this way the students of social sciences understand social reality in a highly reductionist manner permitted by their relevant disciplinary boundaries. However, social scientists across the world have realised this and moved ahead to interdisciplinary researches. Thus, we have new interdisciplinary areas like Labour Studies, Development Studies, Public Health and so on. In fact, leading universities and other centres of academic excellence have come up with new departments like Centre for Exclusion Studies, Centre for Ecological Studies etc. It is in this context that the social science departments of the college mooted the idea of the Social Science Forum in 2017 to create awareness among undergraduate students in this line. The Forum formally came into being in the academic year 2018-'19.

**4. Practice:** The Forum organises seminars/conferences/workshops that promote interdisciplinary studies. Internationally-renowned social science experts are invited to the college for interaction with students. Every year one of the departments is identified as the chief organiser of the programme with the other two departments taking the supportive role. As a precursor to the formation of the Forum an international Seminar was organised under the initiative of the Department Economics on "Approaches to Health in the Neoliberal Context: Transcending Disciplinary Boundaries" on 13<sup>th</sup>&14<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Renowned scholars-cum-activists from the field of public health like Prof. Ronald Moore, (Associate Prof., School of Public Health Medicine and Population Science and Sociology), Dr B Ekbal (Former Vice Chancellor, Kerala University and All India Co-ordinator, Peoples Health Movement), Dr A K Jayashree (Prof & Head., Department of Community Medicine, Pariyaram Medical College), Prof. K Gangadharan (Professor and Head, Department of Applied Economics, Kannur University), Dr Shannu Narayan (Assistant Professor, Humanities and Liberal Arts in Management, IIM Calicut, Kerala) have participated in the conference along with 15 research scholars. In 2018-'19 the Department of Economics piloted the Forum's International Seminar on "State: Historical and Contemporary" which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Internationally acclaimed resource persons like Prof. Vasco La Salvia and Dr Marco Moderato (University of Lieti, Italy), Prof Sanal Mohan, Director (School of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam) steered various sessions. In order to promote interests in social sciences, the forum has also organised an All Kerala Inter-collegiate Turncoat and Quiz Competitions on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019. Students from over 25 colleges including professional colleges have participated in the programme. Contemporary themes related to Economics, History and Political Science were selected for both programmes. In 2019-'20 the Department of Political Science is leading the Forum's seminar.

**5. Evidence of Success:** Indications of the materialisation of the objectives of the Forum were visible in two respects: (1) From the questions raised by the students in the interactive sessions of the seminar and even outside the seminar hall to the RPs, as they clearly indicated the students' curiosity about interdisciplinary research; (2) From the topics that the students selected for their project work in the final semester of the B.A. Programme, as some of the groups have ventured into topics with interdisciplinary concerns.

**6. Challenges:** The syllabi of the B.A. Programmes do not address the objectives envisaged by the Forum and in the tight academic schedule it is difficult to find out extra hours to meet the objectives. The financial constraint for organising seminars with international figures as RPs is another challenge. At present the funds allotted by the PTA to the three departments are pooled together to meet the financial requirements. All permanent teachers of the three social science departments also contribute a fixed amount every year for the activities of the Forum. The college management gives case-based support. In spite of the challenges, the Forum is hopeful of achieving its intended goals through concerted efforts in the years to come.

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## **Best Practice 2:**

### **1. Title of the Practice: BREAST CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAMME**

**2. Goal:** To create awareness about breast cancer among the college community and the society around and to help girls and women to do preliminary examination to detect cases of breast cancer.

**3. Context:** Of all the varieties of cancer, breast cancer is the most easily detectable and curable. The college community came to this realisation when Malabar Cancer Care Society, a non-governmental organisation that has been doing yeomen service in cancer prevention activities in Kerala for about two decades, approached the college for forming a Breast Cancer Brigade of students. The Brigade was formed with the girl volunteers of NSS unit no.10.

**4. Practice:** The project involved orientation programme for all NSS volunteers, specialised training for 20 selected volunteers, house visits as part of awareness campaign, awareness rally, flash mobs etc. The volunteers who were the members of the Breast Cancer Brigade were given specialised training by a medical team of Malabar Cancer Care Society at the college and at Kannur. Then the volunteers visited the households of the village in which the college is situated, which is also adopted by the NSS unit, and sensitised the women about the disease, its detection and prevention. They were also trained to do self examination for early identification of the disease. Awareness promotion activities among the girl students of the college were also undertaken. A public rally was conducted in Payyanur town under the leadership of the Malabar Cancer Care Society in which all the NSS volunteers of the unit took active part. Flash mobs were performed at three crowded streets as part of the awareness campaign and they won great appreciation of the spectators.

**5. Evidence of Success:** The project has been well appreciated by the society which has highlighted it as a token of the social commitment of the students and the commitment of the college to the local community. The response that the Brigade members received during the house visits has been overwhelming. The rally and the flash mobs were well appreciated by the public as

evidenced through the reports that appeared in the media. Further, in appreciation and honour of the services rendered by the Brigade members, Malabar Cancer Care Society honoured the NSS unit and the volunteers at a function in which the Hon'ble MLA of Payyanur Constituency was the chief guest.

**6. Challenges:** As the programme was well planned and organised with the support from MCCS and local bodies, there were no major challenges, except the subdued response from a few of the village women during the survey. Lack of thorough medical knowledge on the part of the volunteers was also a challenge in clearing the doubts of the village women.

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