

St Thomas College, Kozhencherry

Best Practices

1. Support to Weaker Sections of Students

Goal: The institution functions with an objective of supporting economically weaker students to bring them to the main stream of the community.

Context:

The College is situated in the foot hills of the Western Ghats in Pathanamthitta district. Majority of the students hail from socially and economically backward areas and communities. The Management has adopted special norms to enable their getting admission in this institution for higher education and to cater to the needs of the students from the weaker sections. The remoteness of the residences and the financial constraints force many students to attend classes without proper meals, which affect their health and learning capabilities.

Practice:

The Noon Meal Scheme: It is a compassionate gesture envisaged to provide food to the underprivileged students who require noon-meals while in college. A considerable number of students have been benefitted by the noon meal programme supported by the PTA and the teaching and non-teaching staff of the college. The students in need are identified through the Departments and their names are given to the college canteen. They can have the noon meal from the canteen on producing a coupon issued by the teacher who is in charge of the noon meal scheme. This is done with due privacy to protect the students' esteem. In addition to this, many teaching and non-teaching staff take particular care to ensure that no student remains without proper food while attending the classes.

Financial and other Support:

The college community wholeheartedly cooperates with any initiative to provide an employee or student in distress by contributing generously towards fund collection campaigns. During the time of the 2018 floods that devastated the neighbouring areas of the institution and affected many a student and teacher, the faculty extended financial and material aid to the students in distress. They were provided with financial assistance, food kits, dress materials, text books, and notebooks. An amount of Rs. 1,57,485/- was mobilised and used for the purpose, in addition to the emotional support rendered.

Community Service:

The NSS unit of the college organised a series of programmes like health and sanitation awareness programmes in the neighbouring schools and distributed study materials to financially backward students. Awareness programmes regarding health precautions were conducted in the adopted colony at Kurangumala. The NSS unit members visited the flood-affected areas, cleaned homes, and neighbouring schools, chlorinated wells, and distributed medicines and pamphlets. The Departments of English and Mathematics offered classes to the neighbouring school and backward colony respectively as part of their community

service. The MTSA through their Thanal Programme helped a student in the construction of a house.

Counselling and Orientation:

Personal and group counselling programme initiated by IQAC functions meaningfully and effectively with the help of a qualified counsel. It enables students to be confident with positive attitude to face professional and personal challenges in life.

Evidence of Success:

- A good number of students are availing the noon meal programme.
- It has been observed that the beneficiaries of the counselling programme have improved their attendance and academic performance.
- Community extension programmes realise that it is useful to make contributions to society through service and social action. It also helps students to cultivate connections between various organizations, schools, and community groups, which can prove to be very useful later on in life.

Problems:

- Raising funds to maintain some initiatives is difficult. Needs to strengthen other sources to mobilise funds.
- There exists a fear in the minds of the students of getting mocked at and hence they feel insecure about sharing their personal life to the counsellors.

Resources:

- PTA- Parent teachers Association
- Counselling room
- Experienced Counsellor

2. Environmental Sustainability Programme (ESP)

Goal:

Environmental sustainability is the pressing need not only for the present generation, but also for future generations. Hence the importance of “learning to live sustainably” should be addressed as a core issue to have a healthy, clean and safe environment.

Context:

In the current scenario of urbanisation and energy consumption, the present generation has been witnessing an increasing impact of environmental problems such as water pollution, global warming, over exploitation of natural resources, depletion of natural resources etc. Realising this, the institution has initiated many programmes which give thrust to environment sustainability not only to create awareness among the students and the community, but also to conserve our nature for a better living condition.

Practice:

- The oldest building in the college itself houses an overhead water tank to collect rain water. This practice has been emulated by successive generations. Another water tank with a capacity of 5 lakhs litres, constructed forty years ago, has been recently renovated to harvest rain water for use on the campus and in the women's hostel.
- Solar photovoltaic system with a capacity of 10KW was installed in the college to reduce the conventional energy consumption and to bring its self-sufficiency in the college Administrative Block and the adjacent Departments. Recently the Department of Economics, with the support of its alumni, installed 3 KVA DSP Sine Wave Solar hybrid power system to meet the power requirements of the Department of Economics and adjacent classrooms and seminar hall.
- Celebration of important days such as World Environment Day, Ozone Day, World Wetland Day and Wildlife Day.
- "Know the Plant" programme by the Department of Botany by collecting more than 100 plant specimens and displaying them in a scientific manner.
- Vegetos, an agri-organic fest conducted annually to create awareness among students on sustainable and organic farming.
- Plantation and distribution of saplings on and outside the campus to increase green coverage.
- Awareness programmes through Go Green Santhome, Eco Club, and NSS.
- Annual seminar on environmental issues by the IQAC in association with *REYONO journal of interdisciplinary studies*.

Evidence of Success:

- Meeting the energy requirement through renewable energy sources.
- Promoting green initiatives through sustainable, eco-friendly programmes

Problems:

- Raising funds to continue some initiatives is difficult.