

## **Best Practice-I**

### **Title of the Practice –Elevating Rural Areas: A fresh look at Development**

#### ***Objectives:***

West Goalpara College is situated in a remote area of the Goalpara district. Like in other rural areas, this part of Goalpara exhibits a lack of understanding among the nearby population about several fundamental customs and values. There are opportunities for labour in specific fields that could raise people's standards of living and generally aid in the development of the country. As a result, the institution's efforts to improve the rural community are just as crucial as its academic mission. The institution started this practice with this sustaining idea. By conducting activities and awareness campaigns on relevant subjects like education, health and hygiene, environmental awareness, skill development, connecting to the market, and the result of misconceptions and malpractices, among others, this practice aimed to develop the institution's nearby rural community. It was hoped that strategic implementation of initiatives/programs addressing the aforementioned issues would result in a situation in which the nearby community would become aware of the value of education, health, and hygiene, the environment, skills for a living, and the cessation of traditions and wrongdoings.

#### ***The Context:***

"Elevating Rural Areas: A Fresh Look at Development" is a comprehensive and forward-thinking initiative aimed at addressing the challenges faced by rural communities and reimagining the development strategies required to uplift these regions. This concept recognizes the crucial role that rural areas play in the overall socio-economic fabric of a nation and seeks to provide them with the tools and opportunities necessary for sustainable growth and prosperity.

***Economic Disparities:*** Rural areas frequently suffer from economic disparities compared to their urban counterparts. Limited access to job opportunities, lower income levels, and underinvestment in infrastructure and industries can result in stagnant or declining economies.

***Infrastructure Gaps:*** Insufficient infrastructure, such as road networks, electricity, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions, can hinder development in rural regions. These deficiencies not only affect the quality of life but also limit economic growth potential.

***Agricultural Dependency:*** Many rural areas heavily rely on agriculture as their primary economic activity. However, fluctuating crop yields, climate change, and market uncertainties can make rural livelihoods vulnerable.

***Community Engagement:*** The initiative underscores the importance of involving local communities in the development process. Empowering rural residents to participate in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to development goals.

***Sustainable Practices:*** The initiative advocates for environmentally sustainable practices in agriculture and resource management to ensure long-term resilience in rural areas.

***Skills Development:*** Training and skills development programs are encouraged to equip rural populations with the skills needed for emerging industries and entrepreneurship.

***Public-Private Partnerships:*** Collaborations between government, private sector entities, NGOs, and local communities are essential for the successful implementation of development initiatives in rural areas.

***Elevating Rural Areas: A Fresh Look at Development***" represents a visionary approach to addressing the complex challenges faced by rural communities. By focusing on holistic

development, innovation, and inclusive growth, this initiative aims to create vibrant and self-sustaining rural regions that contribute significantly to the overall progress of a nation.

***The Practice:***

The institution has utilized all available avenues to address these problems. These objectives have been continually pursued by the NSS unit, NCC unit, Environment and Climate cell, Eco Club, Women Cell, Assam Science Society (JB Branch), and Teachers' Unit operating at the institution. The institution is bordered by various settlements, as was already described. Surveys were carried out to determine the issues and the villages that were most impacted. Seven communities were adopted by the institution on the basis of these surveys with the promise to address those issues. Every hamlet had its own unique set of issues, which in some ways slowed down progress. Numerous environmental awareness rallies were held in the adopted villages to raise environmental awareness. Plantation programmes have always been a crucial component of the organisations. By involving the youth of the adopted villages, more than 750 seedlings have been planted there. Each student applying for admission to the college had to participate in the sapling plantation. Numerous permanent dustbins were installed in the communities in order to encourage efficient trash disposal. The wetlands' products are the main source of income for the residents of this community. However, the locals were not sufficiently aware of the risks that their activities can entail. The village's residents were made aware of the importance of the wetland and the potential dangers that could result in the loss of biodiversity and ultimately their way of life through awareness campaigns like World Environment Day, World Earth Day, and World Plastic Bag Free Day. The institute has undertaken a number of projects to build and promote the rural economy. The inhabitants of the adopted villages participated in free workshops on rural business, making Vermicompost, pickles, and other topics. In the NSS special camps, people were given chicken chicks and saplings for commercial crops. In addition to those, the institution organized a week-long trade fair to expose the villager-developed goods to the market. Numerous activities have been planned in the schools of adopted villages to boost science education. National Science Day celebrations, science model exhibitions, well-known speakers with scientific backgrounds, classes taught by the institution's science teachers in the schools of adopted villages, science quizzes, essays, poster, and drawing competitions, etc. have all been heavily implemented in this regard. The institution has been doing everything it can to educate the locals about health and hygiene. The organisations has periodically held medical clinics in the adopted villages. There were major awareness campaigns run throughout the year during the COVID-19 pandemic on a variety of venues. Additionally, hand sanitizer and face masks were provided. In addition, the institution has been promoting health and hygiene awareness by holding activities in the villages it has adopted. Here are a few examples: the Swacchata awareness campaign, the World AIDS Day observance, the International Yoga Day celebration, the waterborne disease and potable water awareness programme, the Swachh Bharat Mission street plays, various cleanliness efforts, the building of canals, etc. In the adopted villages, the institution has been striving to eradicate social ills like gender inequity, a lack of understanding of human rights, and communal discord. Communal Harmony Campaign Week, National Girl Child Day, International Women's Day, International Human Rights Day, and other events were observed in this framework.

***The success of Practice:***

Five years after the practice was adopted, surveys were carried out in each adopted village to evaluate the results of the challenges. The survey's findings show that there has been tremendous advancement in a number of areas, including environmental awareness, rural economics, scientific

temperament, personal hygiene, and the abolition of false ideas and practices. Ten survey questions pertaining to the aforementioned fields were used to determine which villages will be used for this practice. The same survey of village families was undertaken five years following the practice's adoption to assess the outcomes in relation to each goal. According to the findings, the people developed greater environmental awareness over time. They increased planting, and single-use plastic usage was seen to decline. The abilities gained through our effort provided significant assistance in reaching the villagers' increased interest in generating income from locally available resources. People started encouraging their young wards to study science after these years. Basic cleanliness practices used to be a major issue in these settlements. The villagers are now more health-conscious than ever thanks to the efforts done under this practice. They were drinking more filtered water and washing their hands more regularly. The population's proficiency with computers has increased.

***Problems faced:***

During practice, the following issues were encountered:

- When the practice first began, the villagers didn't comply with the requests given by the college staff. In the later stages of the practice, reminders that were frequent and repeated were able to solve that issue.
- The usage of single-use plastics has alarmingly increased because there are no affordable alternatives. Consequently, it has proven challenging to transition completely to a state free of single-use plastic.
- To accomplish this goal, more inexpensive and alternative green products must be used in greater quantities.
- There is a lack of computers observed in the households of the villages. This ultimately leads to unsatisfactory progress in terms of imparting computer skills to village residents, despite the college having a sufficient number of skilled individuals to train them. More computers will be required in the village households to overcome this challenge.

***Conclusion:***

Elevating rural areas is not just a matter of social justice; it is essential for a nation's overall development and sustainability. A fresh look at rural development involves a holistic approach that considers economic, social, and environmental factors, aiming for inclusive and balanced growth that benefits everyone, regardless of where they live.



## **Best Practice-II**

**Title of the practice: Higher education for underprivileged & downtrodden sections of society**

### ***Objective:***

The institution makes every effort to provide higher education to the underprivileged and downtrodden section of society with the goal of "Preparing the learners for a knowledge society and strengthening the socio-economic base of the surrounding area through quality higher education." Due to the fact that the majority of residents of the surrounding areas are from impoverished and oppressed social groups and have limited access to higher education, the institution offers these individuals the chance to pursue higher education with the following goals:

- To instil the information and abilities required to compete on a global scale.
- To train civically conscious individuals.
- To foster their individuality and all-around development
- To broaden the institution's actions for social good.
- To strengthen the socio-economic base of people of surrounding areas.
- To develop students' innate talent.

### ***The Context:***

The College is located in a rural area of the Goalpara district of Assam. Except for the college, there is no institute of higher learning up to the Assam-Meghalaya border area of more than 15 KM. A significant percentage of students are enrolled from marginalized and socio-economically weaker sections like ST, SC, and OBC categories. More than 2/3 of students are first-generation learners & 99 % have vernacular background. The majority of the students belong to families with agriculture as the main source of livelihood & their average monthly income is less than Rs5000/. In the absence of access to higher education, the dream of many of the learners of the surrounding areas to pursue higher education would have remained unfulfilled. All these facts also indicate that the college works in an unfavourable situation to materialize its goal of providing access to higher education to the underprivileged & downtrodden section of society. It has a number of locational disadvantages too. However, it is a matter of pride that West Goalpara College has been able to overcome the challenges successfully.

### ***The practice:***

Despite having a few drawbacks, the institution has implemented a number of initiatives to lower the cost and increase access to high-quality education. The institution provides the chance of enrollment

to those students who can't enroll in other institutes either owing to the low percentage of marks at the entry-level qualification or bad economic conditions, taking into mind the poor socio-economic status of the inhabitants of the surrounding areas. The government offers these students free shipping and scholarships so that their financial situation won't prevent them from pursuing their dream of attending college. In addition to the free shipping offered by the government, students have access to scholarships such as Ishaan Uday, Post Metric, Minority Scholarship, and Financial Assistance from MLA, Free Textbook, Subsidy in Hostel Mess Dues, etc. To foster the innate talent of its students, the college places equal focus on educational, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. To assist students in fostering their all-around growth, mentoring and personal and career counselling have been in place. Additionally, the college organizes counselling sessions to help students seek placement and prepare for a variety of competitive tests.

***The success of the practice:***

The college's typical pass rate has been comparable to the affiliated university's average pass rate. The majority of college-enrolled students' cutoff scores fall between 40 and 45 percent. Despite the weak academic backgrounds of its entry-level students, the college has been able to maintain a respectable pass rate. Students from several departments at the institution consistently place in the top ten of the affiliated university's position holders. As a result of the institutional initiatives in the field of sports & culture, a good number of students have brought accolades to the college in various competitions by winning medals. Most of the passed-out students of the college have been hired for positions in both government and non-governmental organisations. Many of the college's graduates have found employment as teachers in schools and colleges, in the military, in banks, and in other State and Central Government positions.

***Problems faced:***

Two key issues the institution faces in continuing this practice are a lack of employees and a poor socioeconomic backdrop. The government should authorize new postings for the College to address this issue. The main challenge the institution faces is the strenuous semester/CBCS/FYGGUP system of the university timetable. To get around this problem, the school creates an annual academic calendar that includes all of its activities with the least possible disruption to the regular class schedule. Another significant issue the university faces with this practice is that some students who have athletic prospects are forced to drop out of school owing to familial issues. The management of the institution makes an effort to motivate and inspire these talented students to actively participate in the extracurricular activities of their choice. The scholarship amount ought to be increased to allow the students to finish their education. The involvement of the business community is what the disadvantaged & underserved students actually need right now.

***Conclusion:***

Higher education for underprivileged and downtrodden sections of society is not only a matter of social justice but also a means to empower individuals and uplift communities. It is a crucial investment in the future, both for individuals and society as a whole. It promotes social justice, economic development, and a more inclusive and equitable society, ultimately leading to a better and brighter future for everyone.

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