

Best Practice 1

1. Title of the practice: Horticulture course with hands-on training

2. The context that required the initiation of the practice

Directorate of Horticulture J&K, in its annual report (2016-17) reported that the area under major horticulture crops (fresh fruits excluding dry fruits) was 144825 hectares in Kashmir province. A deeper look into the report depicts that district Baramulla has the largest area (25203 hectare) under major horticulture crops. The second largest area under the horticulture crops falls in district Shopian (21662 hectares). It means that Baramulla has 17% total area under horticulture crops while as Shopian has 15%. Nonetheless, what this report fails to reflect is that district Shopian has an area of just 612 km² relative to Baramulla which has 4588 km² which is more than 87%. In other words the concentration of horticulture crops in Shopian is significantly higher than any other district in Kashmir province let alone district Baramulla. The report further states that during the reporting period Kashmir province produced 1860463 metric tons apple in which district Shopian contributed about 15 % again trailing by few percentage points from district Baramulla. Against this backdrop, the need was felt that our institution should create, prepare and groom knowledgeable horticulturists to not only carry the legacy forward but enrich it commendably.

3. Objectives of the practice

The objectives of the practice are two-fold:

- a. Create a niche talent pool to act as change agents in transforming the horticulture economy of the district.
- b. To provide gainful employment opportunities for the youth of the district.

4. The Practice

The college has established horticulture garden within the campus for imparting hands-on training to students. This reflects the essence and focus of the institution on skill based education. Students of the horticulture department are given hands-on training in pruning, plant pathology, pesticides, marketing and preservation to name a few. This is the only college throughout the Kashmir valley where horticulture figures in the list of subjects offered to prospective students. Since the economy of the district is horticulture-based as reported above, the course shows a practical link between the educational set up and the main source of livelihood of local populace.

5. Obstacles faced if any and strategies adopted to overcome them

The institution launched the course in anticipation of active support from the government in terms of providing substantive faculty members however, that didn't materialise due to various impediments unknown to the college administration. However, the college is vigorously following up the demands with the relevant agencies to make this course a hallmark in the higher education arena.

6. Impact of the practice

The course was launched with much fanfare and the response from the stakeholders has been unprecedented. We have trained numerous students in the course and the feedback has been noteworthy from the stakeholders.

7. Resources required

The resources required were an onsite horticulture park for imparting the necessary training which the college has been providing without any major inhibitors.

Best Practice 2

1. Title of the practice: Promotion of Sportsmanship and Competitive Spirit among the Students.

2. The context that required the initiation of the practice

On the 26th death anniversary of an acclaimed writer, philosopher, poet and a former professor of Urdu, Shureeda Kashmiri (1924-1991) born in Pinjura Shopian, the college endeavoured to honour the great son of the soil by organising an inter-college Volleyball tournament in his name. The contest was organised to pay a tribute to the departed luminary and to celebrate his literary work, scholarship and vision to transform the local community. His work shares a poignant desperation for the youth of the valley to be harbinger of change and herald a new paradigm with peace, prosperity, enthusiasm, community service, cultural enrichment, literary excellence, sportsmanship as its underpinnings. The invitation for participation received prompt response from the colleges and the competition was 'served' off by the host college principal, Prof. G. M. Dar.

3. Objectives of the practice

- a. To commemorate the life of Shureeda Kashmiri by engaging students in sports.
- b. To promote sports culture in the college and provide a platform to young students to showcase their talent.
- c. To blend pedagogical interventions with alternate co-curricular activities for personality development of the students.

4. The Practice

The host college invited more than 20 institutions to participate in the contest. The exuberance of the participants and viewers was spectacular. Every match attracted big crowds who enthusiastically cheered for their respective teams. The college sports department provided all the logistic support actively backed

by the sports committee of the college. Our college principal, Prof. G. M. Dar worked in mission mode to ensure that the participants drive home indelible memories from the competition. The summit of the tournament saw GDC Dooru and GDC Pulwama locked in their horns. The match was spectacular from the first serve. College was decorated colourfully to celebrate the finals. And in the end, GDC Dooru triumphed. Principal, GDC Dooru, Prof. Mushtaq Ali Mir presided over the prize distribution ceremony. In his short but sagacious speech he noted, “Our College won the competition but the host college won the hearts of all the participants.” He further dwelled eloquently that the richest tribute to Shureeda Kashmiri was to trace his literacy journey and find inspiration in each word his golden pen has jotted down.

5. Obstacles faced if any and strategies adopted to overcome them

The inhibitors to organise and successfully conclude the gala event were innumerable however the spirit underlying the competition turned each threat into an opportunity. The college needed to curate the court professionally before kick-starting the event. And encouraging the prospective participants to enlist for the competition in the remote college was a challenging job. But each challenge was taken head-on by the college administration and accordingly the contest concluded with flying colours.

6. Impact of the practice

The students of the host college have had a consistent and diversified campus experience for the first time during the competition. The campus wore a celebratory look encouraging the students to utilize the campus platform for their personal and professional excellence. We received numerous requests soliciting for the organisation of similar events in the campus.

7. Resources required

The college needs well curated court, sports material, uniforms, and refreshments for the players. However, the arrangements made by the college administration left no loopholes to be plugged in.