

## **BEST PRACTICE 2**

### **DIVYANGJAN (PRAJYOTHI VICTORIA)**

#### **Objective**

In keeping with the spirit of the Right of Persons with Disability Act (Equal Opportunities, Protection for Rights and Full Participation) of both 1995 & 2016, the college assumes a compassionate approach towards differently-abled students, assimilating and accommodating such students into the academic and non-academic activities of the college. Prajyothi, particularly constituted to redress their grievances in the campus, began functioning in 2018, in cooperation with the activities of Kerala Federation of the Blind, Palakkad Unit. The focus is to provide equal educational opportunities to differently-abled students in higher education by creating awareness about their capabilities.

#### **Context**

The organisation is driven towards meeting the specific educational needs of the differently-abled students and thereby concentrates on extending the college facilities for these students. The college is sensitive towards the needs of these students and hence, works towards empowering them through making the campus and facilities both accessible and comfortable for these students. Prime importance is also given to ensure the employability and self-sufficiency for them. The activities of Prajyothi are many and all focused on making the campus friendly to help the needy. All activities are aimed towards making the members competent and comfortable. Inclusion is a motto imbibed into the very fabric of this campus, so as to ensure that no student is left isolated from the campus activities.

#### **Practice**

Sri. Mohandas V K, Assistant Professor of Economics is the Grievance Redressal Officer of Prajyothi in the college.

- 1) A Scribe Bank was constituted in 2016, comprising of student volunteers, to enable our differently-abled students to write their examinations, hassle-free.
- 2) As an initiative to providing learning aids to the students, a sound recorder was given in 2018 to Mukesh, a visually challenged post graduate student from the History department.
- 3) Efforts have been made to provide scholarships and assistance to purchase learning aids through Social Justice Department from 2018 onwards.
- 4) Since 2018, special PTA meetings of the parents of differently-abled students with the teachers, are being held, in order to provide a platform to understand and redress the issues faced by the students in the campus.
- 5) Prajyothi has also undertaken many social welfare activities like taking part in the 2018, flood relief activities of Kerala Government.

- 6) The organisation is also a part of the programmes of the Pain and Palliative Care Unit of the College and the District Hospital, Palakkad since 2018.
- 7) A motivation class by Sri Ganesh Kailas, a motivational speaker for people with differential abilities, was conducted on 20/3/2019.
- 8) Prajyothi has also constituted a functioning Audio library/ Readers' Bank, for visually challenged students in 2019.
- 9) Our differently-abled students are routinely given counselling classes including personal counselling sessions, through Jeevani, Centre for Students' mental wellbeing since 2019.
- 10) Students are taught to use assistive technologies like Accessible- Coconut and N Vision Access, both designed for persons with visual impairment.
- 11) Keeping in mind the future of employment possibilities for differently-abled students, initiatives have been launched like the WhatsApp driven GK awareness programmes in 2019.
- 12) Prajyothi in collaboration with Ability IAS Academy, under the administration of Sri. T.T. Ibrahim is providing civil service coaching for our differently-abled students from 2019.
- 13) The facilities like ramps and wheelchairs, are available in the college, to make the buildings and amenities more accessible and comfortable for needy students.
- 14) Books in Braille script have been made available in the college library.
- 15) On 28th and 29th December, 2019 State Conference of the Kerala Federation of the blind was held in Govt. Victoria College, with the active participation of Prajyothi Victoria.
- 16) In collaboration with the Pain and Palliative Care unit Govt. Victoria College, a one-day rehabilitation camp for wheelchair patients in Palakkad district was conducted on December 13,2019.
- 17) On 15th February 2020, 5 members of the unit participated in the cultural programmes organized by Kerala State Federation of the Blind Palakkad.

### **Evidence of Success**

Though much remains to be done for the upliftment and comfort of our differently-abled students, the campus has successfully implemented inclusivity as a prime motto in student participation. Platforms for showcasing skills and humanitarian endeavours are constantly encouraged by the college. Special thrust is also given to academic performances through various group activities and coaching classes. Prajyothi has been consistent in providing with personal relief counselling sessions to differently-abled students, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown. Our Scribe bank, constituted to combat a prominent issue faced by differently-abled students, that of writing exams smoothly, was highly appreciated by the Kerala Federation of Blind. Our collaboration with Ability Academy as a part of future career prospects for differently-abled students, have active participation from our college. Through the collaboration with various agencies, Prajyothi has participated in various relief activities and has thus extended its presence outside of the campus walls.

### **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

- 1) Lifts and remote sensing white cane, are urgently required for the easy accessibility and mobility of our differently-abled students.
- 2) Modern wheelchairs ensure comfort and easy mobility, which makes it a mandatory requirement for students in need.
- 3) A tutor has to be appointed to teach sign language to our hearing-impaired students and interpreters are required for our students with intellectual disabilities, to ensure their comfort and comprehensibility in the campus.
- 4) The permanent posting of a differently-abled teacher as a grievance Redressal officer (as per 2016 amendment) in the campus, will ensure a steady supervising and redressal of the issues faced by each batch of differently-abled students.
- 5) The Career guidance cell has to be upgraded to be more vigilant and sensitive towards the unique situations of our differently-abled students.