

Institutional Best Practices

Best Practice 1 “ GREEN PROTOCOL”

We, the Cochin College, as an ecologically responsible and environmentally committed institution implemented the “Green protocol” in the year 2018. Green protocol is essentially a set of measures which when implemented results in significant reduction of waste with primary focus on prevention of use of disposables and using reusable alternatives like glass/stainless/porcelain cutleries.

We initiated this programme in association with Plan@Earth a voluntary non-profitable organisation registered as a charitable trust. Plan@Earth works in the area of environment conservation by offering solutions for waste management. The College aimed at constantly observing this Green protocol with a view to achieve the following objectives.

Objectives

1. To create awareness among the students and staff about the practice of green protocol for the conservation of environment.
2. To prevent generation of waste and reduce carbon footprint on campus events.
3. To set up a proper system for managing disposables.
4. To build and sustain a new ecological culture in the institution , that will bring about lifestyle changes amongst people in such a way that is environmentally sustainable in the long term.
5. To spread environmental consciousness and responsible waste management practices to the nearby community through awareness programmes

Context

Waste management is the biggest crisis we have been facing for the last few years. A deep analysis into the problem of solid waste management will light the fact that , waste becoming an unmanageable problem is a very recent phenomenon that began hardly ten to fifteen years back at the most. . Increase in population as claimed by many is definitely not the main reason. If one analyses critically, why only in recent times waste management has become such a big problem, it boils down to one word “Disposables”.

By disposables what is meant here is that the use of one time use and throw products has increased drastically in the past ten to fifteen years and with it the magnitude of the problem of its disposal. Disposable water bottles, disposable paper, Styrofoam and plastic cups, disposable paper, plastic and Styrofoam plates, disposable food packaging including aluminium and Styrofoam packaging, plastic bags, etc. The biggest challenge is these disposable materials causes mixed waste which can neither be composted (Biodegradable part) nor recycled (the non-biodegradable part) increasing the percentage of inert in a waste stream. As a socially responsible institution in the field of higher education, we felt it obligatory to address this issue. It is in this context that we started this program. Therefore Green protocol is essentially a set of measures which when implemented results in significant reduction of waste. The primary focus is on waste minimization through prevention of use of disposables.

The practice

In order to implement the green protocol a multi pronged approach was adopted by the college. As a first step a green protocol committee was constituted consisting of student and faculty representatives. The recommendations of the green protocol committee were put up at the college entrance and in all departments, library and college office. Below are the further actions taken to practice the Green Protocol.

1. The committee promoted the use of fountain pens instead of ball pens for avoiding accumulation of plastic waste through discarded ball point pens.
2. Both the students and staff are encouraged to use glass bottles and steel cups instead of using plastic bottles and paper cups.
3. Directions given to stop the use of plastic covers and flex boards in the campus.
4. Students are advised to use soft bound copy in lieu of spiral bound copy to submit their project.
5. A workshop on re-cycling disposables was organised in the campus.
6. A compost facility has been set up to convert bio degradable waste into compost.

Evidence of success

Plan@earth collected all paper waste from the campus for recycling on 6th July 2018. There would be no monetary benefit for the college. College would only be provided with a green certificate and green credit, based on the amount of paper recycled. The paper waste was converted into fresh A4 papers and distributed among the departments.

Students and faculty members were advised about the phenomenal environmental costs of ball pens and the prefer-ability of reusable fountain pens. There has been an increase in the number of students submitting soft bound copies of the project. The practice of using glass bottles and steel cups were adopted by the college. Vermicompost pots were employed to deal with bio-waste. As a practical session on vermicomposting, vegetable waste was collected from Koovapadam market and converted into vermicompost which was then distributed. After the workshop conducted about up-cycling of plastics, an exhibition of up-cycled plastic and waste cloth was held in the campus. The exhibition attracted the students from other institutions and the local community.

Problems encountered and resources required

Problems encountered	Resources required
Reluctance from the people to switch from one habit to another	More awareness programmes required and a proper follow-up procedure is to be practised
Inadequacy of materials to replace plastic and disposables	With the help of local authorities and their inclusion in this project this constraint can be solved up to to a limit
The increased cost of other alternatives in place of disposable and its maintenance	Through recycling of disposables and its marketing a nominal amount of income can be generated. This can be utilised for solving this issue

Best Practice 2 “ DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE”

Enforcing discipline in an educational institution is crucial for creating a safe environment in the campus and also for the positive development of the students. By adopting this view a discipline committee was constituted by the college council for the academic year 2018-2019.

Objectives

1. To create a secure and harmonious environment in the campus for the overall academic and non academic progression of the students.
2. To support a student to raise his maximum potential independently without dreadful external interventions.
3. To build a self-discipline among the students which is not influenced by a most prevalent social evil in the youth called substance abuse.
4. To resolve complaints regarding disciplinary issues against students and student organizations and to decide the appropriate Institute response.

Context

The Cochin College as a socially responsible institute encourages students to explore in order to advance knowledge at the highest level. It also expects its students to uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, morality and civility. With this context, the discipline committee was formed to resolve complaints of alleged violations of policies and/or community standards by a student, former student, or student organization in a way that is objective and educational, not legalistic or adversarial.

The practice

The discipline committee adopted some practices for enhancing and maintenance of a harmonious atmosphere inside the campus.

1. The executive committee met once in a month to discuss discipline related issues and finalise proper measures to counteract the problems.
2. Monitoring of strict discipline inside the campus was enforced by forming discipline enforcing squads comprising of teachers under the supervision of a senior teacher as convenor of the squad.
3. The discipline squad was allotted with routine discipline monitoring duty on every working days on a rotation basis.
4. During special days of celebrations, each squad was assigned various duties for strict monitoring of discipline throughout the celebrations.
5. The discipline committee monitors all activities and programmes conducted by the college union.
6. Through the regular monitoring of by discipline squads, alcohol and drug abuse inside the campus is prevented.

Evidence of success

The periodic meeting of the discipline committee has helped to identify the discipline issues in the college and various measures were suggested to resolve the said issues very tactically. The activities of the Discipline Squad have helped the committee in finding some disciplinary issues and have been able to eliminate them later. With this constant monitoring, the use of intoxicants inside the college premises could be completely stopped.

Problems encountered and resources required

As a cross section of the society discipline issues are prevailing in the campus. When it comes to maintaining discipline, there are many obstacles to overcome. Mainly the youth will see these measures as an encroachment on their freedom. Proper awareness should be given in the area of fundamental rights, common law and civic sense to the students focusing on keeping a good discipline in their life. In order to ensure that the purpose of the Disciplinary Committee is not compromised, the inward assistance of other stakeholders should be sought. The co-operation from the PTA, the local authority and the parent organisation of the various student union is also required for the smooth handling of the issues by the Discipline Committee.