

7.2. Best Practices

Title of the Practice: Spandan

The objective of the Practice

The College has a history of innovation in intervention in problem situations. Field Action Projects (FAPs) which Faculty Members initiate with student participation have played a major role in establishing the College as a leadership training institute. Many of the FAPs evolved into Non-Governmental Organizations that are contributing to the development of the marginalised sections in India. These FAPs have worked on issues ranging from dowry-related violence, prostitution, communal violence, malnourishment deaths of children, to disability, and HIV/AIDS and disaster; the target groups range from women in distress, street children, mentally challenged children, children of sex workers, to youth, tribal communities, the urban poor and society at large.

In tune with the sustainable development goals to make an inclusive world in line with the vision statement of the College, 'to contribute to building a new social order based on human dignity and social justice to work with a preferential option for the vulnerable and exploited, locally, globally' the FAPs strives to reach out to the most marginalised communities.

Spandan as a Field Action Project of the College was established to promote sustainable development for better livelihood and focus on malnutrition issues at Talsari and Dahanu block of Palghar district, Maharashtra. Spandan meaning heartbeat, resonates with the voice of the Indigenous groups to promote sustainable development for better livelihood and focusing on malnutrition issues at Talsari and Dahanu block of Palghar district, Maharashtra. Spandan envisages promoting livelihood options and addressing issues related to health and nutrition. The operational office is at Gyanjyoti Community College Karajgaon. Gyanajyoti Community College located at Karajgaon was envisaged to provide skill-based education which is accessible to a large number of marginalised communities with specific emphasis on the indigenous groups. The focus is to provide a flexible and open education system which caters to community-based lifelong learning needs

Content:

Voicing concern over the death of 17,000 people due to malnutrition in tribal areas of Maharashtra the Bombay High Court asked the state government to take immediate steps to tackle the problem (India Today, Sep 21, 2016). This issue led to the evolution of Spandan in 2017 in three villages of

Savroli, Anvir and Dongari Initially, Spandan performed a baseline survey and participatory research appraisal to identify the problems in the community and the reasons for malnutrition. The baseline survey showed that there are inter-linkages among several problems such as traditional subsistence of agriculture, migration, lack of awareness about required nutrients, improper dietary habits, substance abuse, preference for home deliveries, lack of awareness on the importance of breastfeeding, lack of quality education, dropouts, lack of access to medical facilities and higher educational institution, disability, mental health and livelihood issues. Spandan launched its initiatives with the focus on Integrated Development Approach and Participatory intervention.

The Practice

The various projects of Spandan

Sakhi

Spandan intervenes with women through *Anganwadi* centres and existing Self Help Groups and organizes various sessions for women on issues related to reproductive health, ill effects of early motherhood, the Importance of self-help groups and the Role of Women in Village Development and the importance of a diverse diet. Through the Collective efforts of the Fieldwork students placed in Spandan and the staff coordinators, Spandan has intervened in twenty-one Anganwadis. To Densitize Pregnant and Lactating Women on different topics related to health. A series of Modules were developed by the students placed in Spandan for Fieldwork such as working towards a healthy community, common health problems, right to health, infectious disease, maternal health, new-born care, and nutritional practices for mother and child. A collaboration with the Health Promotion Trust was initiated to train the Anganwadis on preventive health care. Twelve modules were implemented for training and awareness with Anganwadi staff and women: measurement of a healthy body, water therapy, diet and nutrition, herbal remedies, lifestyle diseases, and newborn care. To address the nutritional needs of children Spandan with the collaborative support of Health Promotion Trust provided a Nutritional powder mix benefiting 37 children.

Kishordhara

Spandan intervenes with school-going adolescents through Kishordhara. Kishordhara focuses on multivariate issues with an emphasis on Skill Development, Personality Development and Career Guidance. With the Concerted efforts of the Students Placed in Spandan for field work different modules were developed by the students. The list of modules and the topics included adolescent

wellbeing, the importance of healthy relationships, time management, study skills, stress management, career goals and aspirations. The modules were implemented in 12 schools.

A session on addressing mental health concerns was organised on 2nd September 2022 in collaboration with Samaritans reaching out to 150 school children. Three career guidance sessions and a Sports Day programme were organised on 17th February 2023.

Unnati

Was initiated to provide alternate livelihood options for the community youth and families by providing training in different skills implemented conducted at Gyan Jyothi Community College, Karajgaon. Under the Unnati project, 84 participants were provided with coconut shell training. During one-month coconut artefacts were taught. Firstly, participants were given information on how to use the machine from cutting to finishing the coconut artefacts. 30 coconut articles were taught in 30 days. Articles such as the flower, cup, fish, hairpin, jewellery, pen, holder, flower vase, lamp, coconut tree and others were taught. The 4 best students had been selected who had picked up the skill very well. They will be the master trainers to conduct coconut shell products for others and support those who still want to brush up on this skill.

Bamboo artefacts training was organised from 28th November to 22nd December 2022 benefiting 39 participants. During 1 month 28 different bamboo products were taught which were the flower vase, mat, flower, photo frame, pen stand, and pens.

The TOT bamboo training was conducted for 3 days in Gangangaon Kandalipada from 20-22nd March 2023 benefitting 15 participants.

Sales of the Bamboo products were organised in 11 places including Churches and institutions across Mumbai.

Satwaahar

The program focuses on ensuring continued learning and practice of setting up Eco-friendly projects with an emphasis on setting up Kitchen gardens to improve the families' food and dietary conditions. The initiatives under Satwahar included the Parasbaug Training on 26th August 2022 by Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal, Herbal medicinal training on 13 February 2023 by Sr. Neela Pateliya and Uttam Vasave from Jeevan Vidya Trust Nandurbad on 13th February 2023. Eight Parasbuaghs were made by Spandan in six schools and three *Anganwadis*. With the

Collaborative efforts of the Decimal Foundation Supplementary nutrition was provided to children. This initiative was handled by Gyanjyothi Community College. With the Financial Support of RUSA, three Gardens were set up as a demonstration Project for the training initiatives of the Nutrition Garden

Evidence of Success

Some of the outcomes of Spandan have been the

For community:

- Capacity Building and Skill enhancement
- Social Capital Formation
- Economic Empowerment
- Social Inclusion and Equity
- Cultural Competence Development
- Cultural preservation and revitalization
- Environmental Sustainability
- Community Engagement and empowerment
- Networking and liaison with local self-government bodies and other organizations.

For students

- Application of theoretical knowledge in the field.
- Critical reflection and Ethical Practice
- Research and Evaluation
- Personal and Professional Growth
- Link: Annual Report 2022-2023 with programme outcomes

<https://cswnn.edu.in/sites/default/files/users/user23/DOC-20230415-WA0024.pdf>

Problems encountered and resources required

One of the major challenges of Spandan has been resource mobilisation for the initiatives, staff to cater to the magnitude of services needed, the distance across the hamlets and the complex issues and concerns facing the communities across all groups.