

7.2 Best Practices

1. Title of the Practice : *'PEN-R' – Project on English Newspaper Reading*

- **Goal:** To inculcate reading habit among the entire students of the college. Subscription to more than hundred English newspapers for the students aims at improving their reading skills, developing confidence in English communication, improving their general awareness, broadening their vision, improving their vocabulary, inspiring their thoughts and helping them to absorb all kinds of information. Though the primary objective of subscribing the 'Business Line' is to develop business orientation among the Commerce students, it helps them to improve their English language skills.
- **The Context:** Majority of the students hailing from poor rural background and first generation learners of this Institution are the products of Malayalam Medium Schools. Even though they are better in their major subjects, their Communication Skill (both oral as well as written) in English Language is poor. The Institution realizes that English communication skills are essential for the overall development of students. The confidence level of students can also be improved by acquiring competency in English Language. This was the driving force in introducing the practice of subscribing English National Dailies, The New Indian Express and The Hindu for each batch of UG students of the College. The recommendations of the NAAC Peer team in 2005 to give maximum emphasis on developing the communication skills of students have been considered very seriously. This project is an effort to materialize the same.
- **The Practice:** The Institution started subscribing two copies of The New Indian Express to each class on an experimental basis in 2006 and the result obtained was amazing. This was literally the driving force to think of making English newspapers available to each student in their class room, free of cost. The number of newspapers available to the students has been raised to three in the next year. The development in the reading habit of students was discernible. In the next year, the Institution has contacted the authorities of The New Indian Express and The Hindu to provide newspaper at reduced rate. The New Indian Express has agreed to reduce the rate to Rs. Two per copy, provided the College should subscribe a minimum of fifty copies. When the Student Edition of the New Indian Express was launched in 2011, the regular newspaper being supplied to the students was replaced with this. The Hindu daily has also agreed to supply the newspapers on a subsidized rate. Since the Peer Group Learning is an accepted practice in the College, the Slow Learners and the Advanced Learners sit together to read newspapers to engage in news analysis etc. The Media Club of the Institution conducts news reading contest and Newspaper Quiz for the students every year. The evidence of its successful impact on each batch of our students and the continuing feedback of the outgoing students suggested the continuance of PEN-R as one of the

best practices of the college. In order to put the objectives of the Project into practice, the Institution gives the following directions to the students: Try to read at least one small article twice a day. Do not try to read much, but try to make it a habit to read something every day. Try to read without a dictionary and guess the meaning of the whole article, even if you do not understand some parts. Choose articles that the student is interested in reading. Read the same type of article every day at the beginning and gradually increase the amount that he/she reads. After he/she can read that type of article well enough, try different types. Try to memorize words or phrases, which appear many times.

- **Evidence of Success:** Visible attitudinal change in the reading habits among the students ·Better results in the University examinations in the Common Course in English ·Improvement in the Presentation of Seminars by the students ·Improved classroom performance of students ·Active participation of students in participatory learning ·Results of Campus Interviews for Placement in the recent years. ·Increased number of readers of English magazines and subscribers of English books from the Central Library.

 - **Problems Encountered and Resources Required Problems Encountered:** Majority of the newly admitted students do not have the habit of reading newspapers, even in their mother tongue, regularly. To bring back the students to the print media was a challenging task in the initial stage as their access to the mass media was limited to Television. Since the competency in English language is limited, the level of confidence of the students, especially the Poor Learners, was very low.

 - **Resources Required:** In order to materialize the objectives of the project, discussions/meetings at various levels have been conducted/convened. The possibilities of the Mentoring System have been utilized to the maximum extent to get the project materialized. Open forums to discuss the significance of acquiring competency in the Global language have been organized. The availability of the English National Dailies at concessional/cheaper rates has been explored.
- 2) **Employment Training Program for Tribal Women** - A project for providing assistance to the tribal women of the district by the students of the College.
 - 3) **Scollege Programme**, an initiative for improving the communicative skill of High School students of the neighbouring schools.
 - 4) **Gothra Jyothi**— A project for providing assistance to the tribal communities of the district by the students of the College.