

7.2.1 Best Practice I

1. Title: Gender Sensitisation through syllabi and Women's Day

2. Objective: (a) to inform and sensitise the students of Visva-Bharati and the broader community about gender inequality; (b) to generate awareness about the nature, evolution and strategies of entrenchment of patriarchal power; (c) to assess the strategies that perpetuate gender inequality; (d) to teach about the struggle of generations of women, intellectually and through records of activism, to withstand the socio-economic forces that seek to continue gender inequality; (e) disseminating knowledge about positive practices and the reflection of these in Women's Writing that implement gender-equality.

3. The Context: Historically, as well as in contemporary times, women have remained marginalized and exploited in the domestic space as well as the public sphere, when they emerged as part of the active workforce. In the contemporary world, the nature of the challenges for women have grown into more complicated issues not only in daily life-activities, but also through sexually derogatory work and words being spread by means of the media, including the social media, and through upcoming challenges needed to be addressed in the courses, texts, and the work done surrounding the observation of the Women's Day at the Department of English.

4. The Practice: The Department of English has designed and implemented the teaching of the following courses at the University: (a) 'Contemporary India: Women and Empowerment' (GEC) at the Undergraduate Level CBCS Programmes. (b) 'Women Writing in India' at the pre-CBCS B.A. (Honours) in English Course; (c) Paper M 4.2 (Core): Literary Theory II in the MA English Programme where traditional and contemporary concepts of feminism as well as the LGBTQ issues are taught as compulsory course; (d) MA (English) Optional Paper M.Op.13 entitled 'Gender and Sexuality in Literature and Films'; (e) MA (English) Optional Paper M.OP.53 entitled 'Women and Literature by Women'

Women's Day Celebration at the Department of English with the active support of Visva-Bharati authorities, participation of students across gender and Department of the Institution and broader audience from public life ensure that the organizers, participants and audience voluntarily and actively seek to share the knowledge and experience through performances, reading and open house sessions.

5. Evidence of success: (a) Both of male and female students and teachers of Visva-Bh9ara, have eagerly participated in the celebration of Women's Day (b) the courses designated and taught regarding gender issues have been well-attended; (c) Students have advanced to the M Phil and PhD levels who have employed Gender-Oriented theories to address the critical questions arising in their research; (d) former students who have received instruction on Gender issues have progressed to academic and non-academic workplace and well-equipped to address the question of gender-inequality and issues involving sexual harassment. These results indicate that the objectives of addressing gender-inequality and positing positive gender equity practices have been successfully achieved.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Individual Department have limited scope to implement the necessary Programmes and courses to disseminate comprehensive knowledge of Gender-related issues across the university and the local community. The attempts of the Department of English, the Women's Studies Centre and the ICC have been part of an ongoing process at the respective sections to address the question of gender-inequality through curricular and constitutionally enabling practices but gender integration of this work at the University and community level will help a larger section of the population.

Best Practice II

1. Title: Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Practices in Curricula and Institutional Work
2. Objectives: (a) to inculcate humane and Environment-sustainable ethical ideals in the students and community of Visva-Bharati; (b) to create awareness about the causes behind and sources of pollution at the local, national and global levels resulting in destruction ; (c) to teach the students of Ecocritical positions, theories and ideals as interdisciplinary in nature, involving History, Literature, Geography, Economics, Public Administration, Philosophy and Ethics, Gender and Subaltern Studies; (d) to disseminate knowledge of positive Environmental and Ecological Ethics and Practices as inspired by Rabindranath Tagore's life, work and words and applied in Visva-Bharati.
3. The Context: As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the irreversible changes in the physical, social and moral environment worldwide eventually created a legacy of loss and inequity that continues to plague the contemporary world and would harm the future generations as well. In this historical context, the global South, including India, continues to suffer due to the worsening environmental and ethical situation. Environmental Ethics requires knowledge of these global inequalities, self-criticism and assuming a humane, responsible role in restoring and conserving bio-diversity and healthy environmental and ecological relations.
4. The Practice: The formulation and teaching of the following Papers in the MA in English syllabus are relevant: (a) Compulsory study of Ecocriticism in M 4.2 Literary Theory II Core Paper; (b) compulsory study of M4.3 Core paper on Postcolonial Literature; (c) compulsory study of M2.3 Core Paper 'Rabindranath Tagore'; (d) M. Op. 29 on Literature and Environment/Ecology and (e) M. Op. 65 on Literature and Santiniketan-Sriniketan. All Undergraduate students of Visva-Bharati, across Disciplines, compulsorily learn about Environmental Studies and Tagore Studies. The entire Visva-Bharati community participates in the celebration of positive environmental ideals and practice fostering sustainability, initiated by Rabindranath Tagore, through 'Briksharopan' or the Tree-Planting Ceremony and the integration of the Institution with local agricultural practices and the rural population during 'Halakarshana' and on 10 March annually, during a Cleanliness and Self-reliance Drive to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Santiniketan, and more recently, in this legacy culminating in the institutional activities during the 'Swachh Bharati' Cleanliness Drive.
5. Evidence of Success: (a) MA in English students opting for Courses offering the study of Ecocriticism and Literature and the Environment; (b) the progress of the students to conduct Ph D and M Phil research on Ecocritical ideals, including Ecofeminist issues and (c) the sustenance of the heritage of Visva-Bharati's efforts to integrate the human, environmental, community and rural agricultural practices with the curricula, following the positive environmental practice initiated by Rabindranath Tagore.
6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required: The implementation of sustainable environmental practice by Visva-Bharati faces enormous pressure during Basantotsava and Poush Mela, because of the burgeoning number of tourists and resultant escalation in the level of pollution, requiring greater manpower and physical resources to restore Tagore's Visva-Bharati premises and the surroundings to the pristine condition annually.