

## **Best Practice 1: The UNESCO and Cardinal Paul Poupard Foundation Chair for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and its related Diploma Courses 2020 - 2021**

### **Aims and objectives:-**

- To promote Congresses, Conferences and Publications.
- To create Chairs in Universities to help students with grants.
- To promote 'Dialogue of Cultures'.
- To contribute peace building, poverty eradication, sustainable development, and Inter-Cultural Dialogue through Education, Sciences, Culture, Communication and Information.

### **Context:-**

The UNESCO Chair aims at global peace and harmony.

The Chair offers a Graduate Diploma course in Religion & Society, Peace and Dialogue and conducts a PG Diploma in Inter-Religious Dialogue and Water for Sustainable Development in collaboration with the Institute of Indian Culture and Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work in Mumbai. All events and diploma courses facilitate student discussion and gain additional analytical skills to foster critical thinking.

### **Practice:-**

The Executive Committee of the Chair, comprising the Principal, Dr. Marie Fernandes & Adv. Giuseppe Musumeci, Chair Holder, other Committee members and Prof. Sharmila Dhote, Secretary, plans and monitors the activities of the Chair.

The Executive Committee primarily focuses on:

1. Managing the internal and external affairs of the Chair.
2. Looking after the legalities of the Chair.
3. Decisions regarding the activities of the Chair
4. Networking

The International Symposium is the crowning glory of the Chair, constantly sheds light on promoting peace, harmony and tolerance. The theme for this academic year is "Evolving Communities for Greater Solidarity". The Symposium provided a deep understanding of the sustainable approaches, which requires a bedrock of Humanism to foster in our youth.

Events under the banner of 'Saatotsav' (a week of events) conducted online included a Short Story Competition on the topic - "The Role Of Culture In People Of mixed Origin", a Movie Analysis, a Poetry Competition- "Rhyme on Time", Mandala Glass Painting workshop and Presentation and Guest lecture on "Cyber Culture: The New Culture, Cultural Voyage to Four Corners of the World", Essay Writing and Quizzes.

### Evidence of Success:

- **First and only college in Mumbai to be conferred the UNESCO Chair and Cardinal Paul Poupard Chair for Inter-Religious and Intercultural Dialogue colleges since 2009.**
- **Successful enrollment of Diploma Courses.**
- **Grand success of 12<sup>th</sup> Online International Symposium with representations of 3 Ministries across the three continents of the globe.**
- **Successful release of Volume 10, Publication of Ethics and Society: An International Journal Religions and Cultures for Peace and Harmony (PISSN: 2250-3331).**
- **UNESCO Chair Review**

The college was awarded an extension of 4 years of the UNESCO Chair until 8th September 2023 with the Evidence letter issued in 2020-21.

### Future Initiatives-

- To facilitate Research Projects among college students related to Religion, Culture and Social aspects.
- To promote the Chair's activities on a broader platform across Colleges, Religious and Cultural Institutions in Mumbai.
- To collaborate with other UNESCO Chairs in India.
- To collaborate with NGOs at the local level.

### Best Practice 2: Social Outreach Program

#### Aim/Objective :-

The program aims to give back to the community and to have a true understanding of the Social and Economic issues of the world. Our college firmly believes in the application of classroom training and understanding of the outside community especially by reaching out to the marginalized sections of society.

#### Practice :-

SOP for the Academic Year 2020-21 for the Degree & Self-Financed students was conducted online through google meet & whatsapp due to the ongoing COVID 19 Pandemic.

For the Aided section, Ms. Deepika Singh designed the modules and implemented the online mode of SOP. Modules included themes like:

- Each One Teach One
- Helping Aged
- Covid 19 issues

- Climate Change issues
- Farm Laws
- Anti-Ragging.
- Simple fitness at home: during & post lockdown etc

For Self-Financed students, The CSA (Center For Social Action ) implemented by Fr. Mario Mendes helped in designing the following groups:

- Self Help
- English Language Class
- Financial Empowerment Program
- Farmers Group, Domestic Workers
- Bal Sabha, Gavki
- Livelihood
- Digital Literacy etc

An MOU is entered between the third party and the college to carry out the Social service work.

Based on the Covid 19 protocol, all SOP activities were undertaken online. Following methods were used for undertaking the SOP:

- Need Assessments
- Online Sessions
- Interviews
- Case studies
- Developing/Initiating online campaign in some themes
- Whatsapp groups, Google form, and task tracker were used to keep track of the activities done by the students. The students had to submit reports and documentation through email to the Professor-In-Charge.

**Evidence of Success :-**

- For the Year 2020-21, Out of the 281 SYBCom students who enrolled for SOP, 271 students of SYBCom submitted their reports.
- From the Self-Financed Course, 327 students enrolled for SOP. Along with this, a report is submitted by the students expressing their enthusiasm in completing the SOP.

**Challenges Encountered and Resources Required :**

- Conducting the SOP in the given context of the Covid 19 was a great challenge as everything had to be online contrary to the usual practice of SOP where the students are physically present at the center to undertake their SOP projects.

- Family of the students being tested positive for Coronavirus added to the emotional stress. In spite of these challenges faced during the pandemic and the online mode, the SOP work was handled with utmost patience and understanding.