

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**  
**Reaccredited with A+ Grade by NAAC (4<sup>th</sup> Cycle)**  
**Thoothukudi**  
**Best Practices 2021-22**

The institution has two distinct best practices that cater to the well-being of the students, both on and off the campus. They strengthen the morale and integrity of the young women to face the challenges in the world, especially during the pandemic period.

**“Reach the Unreached”**

**Best Practice I**

**Title of the Practice:**

**Women for Women Welfare- Community Development Programme (CDP) TOUCH**

St. Mary's College is dedicated to educating young individuals with a focus on fostering their contribution to societal advancement. Central to its mission is instilling the intrinsic value of every individual, thereby guiding students towards a purposeful existence. The curriculum extension platform embodies educational principles encapsulated by the motto “Serve While You Learn.” This educational approach underscores the importance of community service emphasised through the curriculum. Through extension activities, students engage in service, reflection, and learning, thereby nurturing a holistic educational experience.

**Objectives**

- To construct a mutual link with the students and society
- To generate conscious collective living
- To instil human and social concern
- To bring transformation for social betterment
- To adopt and adapt for the well-being of the society.

**The Context**

Although 80% of the younger generation unequivocally come from underprivileged backgrounds, they are immersed in a competitive world and strive vigorously to succeed in life. There is a notable lack of awareness, or perhaps an indifferent attitude, towards social realities, leading to a significant disparity between the privileged and the disadvantaged. The HEI plays a crucial role in awakening them to the harsh realities of life, fostering empathy and

concern for others, which can promote sustainable living. St. Mary's has integrated outreach programmes which focus on societal welfare into the learning process, offering benefits to both students and the community.

### **The Practice.**

The institution is dedicated to enhancing the social and economic standing of rural regions, aiming to uplift their communities. Its Community Development Programme encompasses the values, concepts, practices, and challenges faced by various communities, enabling students to explore solutions within these groups. This initiative moulds the students into community volunteers, providing insights into both the obstacles and advantages associated with the inclusion of the marginalised in community development efforts. It extends to the adopted villages of Korampallam, Maravanmadam, Palayakayal, Servaikaranmadam and Tharuvaikulam. Various development schemes such as Terrace gardening, Water conservation, Rainwater harvesting, Tree plantations, Soft skills Training, and Rural Entrepreneurship Development schemes such as tailoring, fashion designing, Preparation of Home Products were implemented and created an awareness of these practices in the day-to-day life in the adopted villages. Rotary Club and Morning star NGO also supported the programme. The students actively participated in all the social activities. The college offers different training programmes and hands on training for the rural women to meet their basic financial, economic, and social needs. It sponsored eco-friendly programmes on water harvesting, roof garden, pond cleaning and making cloth bags.

- Distribution of sanitizers, mask, rice, and grocery items.
- Distribution of nutritional health mix to the children
- Conduct of Covid Vaccination Survey, Election Awareness Campaign
- Conduct of Awareness Programmes on “Mental Health,” “Hazards of Plastic Usage”
- Installation of Solar Lamps
- Entrepreneurship Development & Hands on Training programmes on “Preparation of Organic Household Essentials,” “Natural Fertilizer-Vermicomposting,” “Origami Craft: Art from Paper,” “Mushroom Cultivation”
- Orientation sessions for the kids on “Digital Literacy,” “Digital Elucidation of Bio-Living Creatures,” “Digital Presentation of Dissection in Invertebrates and Chordates” and “Efficient Learning of Linguistic Skills and Mathematical Fundamentals,” “Imparting Skills in Mathematics” and conduct of Evening Tutorials.

- Orientation sessions for the women on “Women’s Health and Menstrual Hygiene”
- A project entitled “Prospecting of Fishery Resources into Value Added Products” was sanctioned by UBA.





## Evidence of Success

The CDP has led the transformation of the college community as well as the adopted villages in and around our region. Involvement of the faculty and the students in the service of the rural and the semi-urban poor has enabled to create a positive impact in the quality of life and living, empowering the self and the society. Academics with such linkage to the society had been certainly a fruitful exercise. Students realize their responsibility towards the social progress of the society. It has forged them into pragmatic social workers. As the extension activities are done on a weekend, approach to inmates of the neighbourhood is possible. Appreciation of service by the people and NGOs of the activities of the college has created credibility of the CDP programme. It has emerged as a participatory, holistic, and inclusive practice that leads to a positive and concrete development both to the students and the society. Students are able to restore the health and hygiene of the self and the natural environment.



## Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Problems encountered are overcome through the extended activities of social concern. However, the common constraints of time and distance are crucial. In the midst of Covid 19 students' participation is restricted. Sometimes continual follow up measures could not be undertaken immediately due to the restriction routine of the pandemic. 'TOUCH' touches 'Self' and 'Society.' Modalities of transport was one of the hurdles to the optimum utilization of the programme. Financial allotment through Government Schemes and voluntary contribution of our management helped in promoting the welfare of the poor and needy in the society. It also instils social responsibility in every student to serve for the betterment of the society and the nation.

## **Best Practice II**

### **Title of the Practice: Efficacy of Ethical, Social and Sustainable Progress**

St. Mary's College enhances the core values of ethical and moral standards of life in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic through the curriculum and the experiential learning pedagogy. It believes in imparting the value of life and means to combat pandemic times. The curriculum incorporated the civic responsibilities along with the educational values. Both the students and the faculty served the society to relieve the stress and storm in the present scenario for the welfare of the society.

St. Mary's College fosters an honest, honourable, and fair environment for all the students. It lays its stress not just on academic excellence but on "character formation with academic excellence." It motivates students to "always aim high" and cultivate core values which should be the governing principle of their lives. The students of St. Mary's College imbibe the qualities of human values and become socially conscious, intellectually competent, culturally relevant, morally upright, religiously vibrant and emotionally balanced young women.

St. Mary's College gives importance to Guidance and Counselling as part of its educational mission in the contemporary era. Counselling is the aspect of the educational programme and a predominant student support system which is concerned with helping the students to get accustomed to their present situation and to plan the future in terms of the academic initiatives, their interest, abilities, and social needs. The organised Counselling practice "Counselling for Inner Healing," the conduct of ethics classes for the non-Catholic students and the conduct of Christian doctrine classes for the Catholic students and the effective practice of Mentor- Mentee system have made their impact on the growth and development of the students and have improved the outcome of the academic programme.

### **Objectives**

- To help the students overcome the mental stress and the fear and focus on the academics.
- To ensure social responsibility and civic sensibility among the students.
- To provide timely counselling in tough times.
- To render helping hands to the public.

## **The Context**

The institution instils social responsibility and civic sensibility among the future generation and encourage them to find out the ways and means to combat the difficulties they face in their day-to-day life especially during the pandemic times. Human values are inculcated as a part of the curriculum, and they were implemented by serving the society, to relieve them from stress and provide preventive measures to combat the pandemic situation. The institution encourages counselling, conduct of Ethics and Christian Doctrine classes and Mentor-mentee system to help the students attain self-awareness and realisation, to become a motivated, and goal-oriented person, to develop their personal skills in various environments, to equip them to meet future problems, getting help from their own selves in order to groom themselves in a better way.

## **The Practice**

The institution took all earnest efforts to share their social responsibility and promote civic sensibility among the students to prevent stress and take precautionary steps to counterattack the spread of the pandemics. Services were provided through online webinars and Counselling Forum to overcome the stress and maintain healthy practices for the well-being of the common people, the faculty, and the students. The mentors communicated with their mentees during the pandemic time and ensured that they are stress free. The faculty and the management indulged in Tele Counselling service in collaboration with the district administration under the aegis of the District Collector and gave moral support to the people and brought in a positive change in them to overcome their fear and stress. The district administration acknowledged the great service of the institution with a certificate of appreciation.

- Conduct of Ethics classes for the non-Catholic students and Christian Doctrine Classes for the Catholic students
- Regular meetings of the Mentor and the Mentees
- Counselling for the
- Provision of Tele Counselling 24x7
- Awareness through Competitions
- Free Medical check ups
- Awareness on the prevention and handling the Pandemic situation.





### Entry Counselling



### Exit Counselling



### Sports Counselling



### Personal Counselling

## Evidence of Success

The institution conducts Ethics and Christian Doctrine classes helped in the enhancement of the spiritual formation of the students. The Mentor-mentee system fosters personal and academic growth, enhances career readiness, and contributes to a supportive and inclusive campus community. The college Counselling Forum is active, and counselling is given to the students as per their needs. Due to Covid-19, the forum also provided online counselling. Types of counselling given to the students are Entry counselling, Exit counselling, Individual counselling, Personal counselling, Parental counselling, Counselling on Reference,

Sports counselling, Pre, and Post–marital counselling and Tele-Counselling. Various therapies were adopted as per the need of the students. The counsellors gave free Tele counselling during covid time joined with the National commission for Protection of the child rights (NCPCR) and NIMHANS Bangalore.

### **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

Due to the pandemic restrictions, mentors could not meet the mentees in person for a few months. They talked to the mentees over phones and discussed their progress. Government restrictions during pandemic times hindered to serve the society and parents did not allow the students to serve out of fear and stress. Student volunteers and mode of transport are required to overcome the difficulties of the pandemic period.