Best Practice 1

Title: Digitization of the Campus

Objectives of the Practice:

Institutional digitization brings economy, efficiency, effectiveness, timeliness, error-freeness, and possibilities for paperless and remote work in the institution. Being inspired by the technological advancements, Prafulla Chandra College pursues the drive of digitization of the campus to fulfil the following objectives:

- To run a fully online faceless admission system.

- To ensure fully hassle free-Cashless transactions by adopting all types of digital collection and payment modes.

- To digitize its office and administrative operations.

- To digitize Teaching, Learning and evaluation system.

- To contribute to the 'Digital India' move.

- To enhance the level of Digital Literacy among its staff and students.

Context:

Manual system of admission was labourious, time consuming, costly for remote students, and subject to intrusion of some unscrupulous middlemen. Due to time sharing with two sister colleges and shortage of permanent staff, timely transactions through banks/cash were a difficult task. Tackling with the staff shortage, minimization of human errors, providing new experience to all stakeholders and making the system accessible at all levels, adoption of modern technologies in office, library and other field of operations were inevitable. Promotion of modern technology in teaching-learning process through use of ICT enabled methods, increasing emphasis on e-education, e-learning and a gradual progression towards digitalization of the teaching learning process through introduction of e-LMS facilities were made to provide wider access to students and teachers. By digitalizing almost all operational areas, the college supports the 'Digital India' move by the Government of India and has made Digital Literacy mandatory for staff and students.

The Practice:

- The college runs fully online admission system through a dedicated admission portal. The entire process of admission, from collection and sorting of applications, preparation and publication of provisional merit list to payment of admission fees is done through the admission portal. It is a fast, efficient, student friendly and hassle-free system. The process is faceless and transparent. The documents verification is done at commencement of classes. This system automatically transfers data to the college office and accounting software, and also to the university registration process, making it easier for the college office to maintain and retrieve students' data.

- The college uses Internet Banking, Payment Gateways, POS and UPI as digital mode for financial transactions. This ensures hassle-free and easiest mode for students for payment of fees, and error free mode of accounting records for office.

- The college promotes e-governance in all its operational activities. It uses Students' Module of ERP for office management, whereby the entire students' database is collected, recorded, analysed and reports are generated as per need of the management. The software is also used to manage University Registration, examinations, ID card and certificates generation. The Accounts Module of ERP automatically collects and records online payments of students and is used for recording and finalisation of books of accounts. The Salary and Provident Fund for the staff, and Students' Scholarship are also dealt with through digital platforms.

- KOHA software is used in the library for Automation. The college is in the process of full automation of library through RFID system.

- The college uses a user-friendly comprehensive website to integrate the entire process of digitisation and communication system. While, the college uses a web-linked digital Display Board for on-campus communication of notices, class and examination routine, and other relevant information, it uses bulk SMS services to serve off-campus notices and information. Online complaints, suggestions and feedbacks are also collected through different designated portals.

- In its teaching-learning process the college uses flat panels and Smart Boards in all the classrooms. It has two connections of high speed (300mbps each) both wired and Wi-Fi Internet connections. It uses Video-Conferencing Hall and Auditorium for audio-

visual contents. It has a designated e-LMS portal (ESHIKSHAK) through which the teachers supply class notes, question banks and study materials to students and the students get clarifications of their doubts. It has a dedicated portal to conduct online examinations and OMR based examination system for transparent assessment.

Evidence of Success:

The college has witnessed some visible successes due to digitalization. With reduction in the number of permanent office staff and increasing work-load both in terms of nature and volume over time, the college handles its affairs more timely and efficiently. Similarly, with the increase of subjects, (initially through CBCS and now NEP 2020), better delivery of curriculum and timely assessment of students are ensured even with the same number of teachers. The major successes are:

- Ensuring hassle free, transparent, time bound, face-less admission system that provides equal opportunity to both near and far students. It also completely eliminated unscrupulous middlemen from the system.

- Timely collection of fees, prompt reflection in college accounting, eliminated human errors and ensured transparency in the system. It also increased students' satisfaction and directed towards cashless campus.

- Prompt supply of data through MIS as and when required.

- More attractive and productive teaching learning in terms of students' active participation in class with increased use of ICT-enabled teaching aids.

- Immense benefits of the e-LMS portal for the students, particularly during Covid-19 pandemic, when this digital mode of operations was indispensable for smooth running of the teaching, learning and evaluation process.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Although digitalization process has been instrumental in reducing space and time-sharing problems, the college has noticed following lacunas in the process.

- Though the admission system has been designed so that the entire process can be completed from homes, some students rely on cyber cafes, which creates the middlemen problems.

- Since the process of digitization is dependent on third party software and mostly internet based; these are subject to communication gaps and technological glitches.

- Although the college provides all modes of digital payment system, a few students still prefer to pay in cash and force the college to maintain cash counter and cannot make the campus completely cashless.

- Some of students are from poor financial background having limited access to computer/smart phones with internet facility and some students belong to remote rural areas having network issues; these students cannot enjoy the online resources and facilities provided by the college.

Best Practice 2

Title: 360-Degree Appraisal of Teachers

Objectives of the Practice:

The thrust of Prafulla Chandra College, since its inception, remains on maintaining quality of academic standard. 360-Degree Teachers' Appraisal is one of the methods applied to measure the educational standard of the college. Objectives of this appraisal are:

1. To comprehend the extent to which the teachers fulfil the expectations of stakeholders, particularly that of students and the management.

2. To determine efforts of the teachers for updating their academic standards and achieved level thereof over time through FDP, research and similar activities.

3. To suggest and make arrangements, if required, for academic standards upgradation among the teachers.

The Context:

This College was established by Brahmo Samaj Education Society (BSES), a pioneer Society formed in the 19th century, to impart quality education among different sections of the society including women and working-class youths. The BSES established colleges in the prime location of Kolkata city and was very selective in appointing teachers to maintain high standard of academic quality in its colleges. As a result, this college has a pool of highly qualified and efficient teachers who put in their utmost efforts to serve the students. However, a gap or ridge is often created between the standard or process of delivery of curriculum by the teachers and expectation of the students from the teachers. To bridge the gap and to maintain best possible academic standard, the college management adopts different mechanisms. 360-Degree Teachers' Appraisal is proved to be the most effective among the methods adopted till date.

The Practice:

360-degree Teachers' Appraisal system is an all-round evaluation and reporting mechanism that examines a teacher from different angles. Often teachers do not directly comprehend the difficulties of students due to their shy nature. In this Appraisal system, multi-source confidential and anonymous feedback is collected from the stakeholders on various attributes of a teacher. Primarily, the attributes are set on the basis of expectations from a teacher like his/her academic depth of knowledge, efforts to update himself/herself, attitude, temperament,

sincerity, mode of delivery, etc. On the basis of these attributes and the areas of interest of the stakeholders, feedback questionnaires are designed to conduct surveys on each teacher. Although, stakeholders may be of several categories with varied interest, for simplicity and fruitful result, Prafulla Chandra College collects feedback about its teachers from four angles viz.

1. Feedback from the students about their perception on each of the teachers directly teaching them,

2. Self-Evaluation of the Teachers on their own perception and level of satisfaction about curriculum delivery,

3. Appraisal from the Management reflecting their expectation and perception of the performance of a teacher, and

4. Appraisal from an external peer who is well informed about the functioning of the college, in the form of rating and suggestions on each teacher.

The IQAC continuously collects these feedbacks and suggestions through a dedicated online portal. At the end of every Academic year, the IQAC analyses the data so received, prepares a report, including a comparative analysis between self-evaluation by a teacher vis-à-vis evaluation by other stakeholders, on individual teachers and communicates the outcome alongwith suggestions thereof, if any, to the Principal. The Principal, after receiving the reports, discusses the emergent issues with the teachers individually, as and where necessary. Finally, the Principal convenes a general meeting of the teachers to discuss on the reports and to prepare a future course of action.

With the feedback received from students and management, the teacher gets a clear idea about their expectation and perception of him/her, and with the suggestions from the external peer, the teacher can improvise and upgrade his mode of operation that would enrich the overall quality of teaching -learning in the college. Based on future course of action so prepared and on the direction by the principal, the IQAC arranges necessary conferences, seminars, workshops, talks, etc. on quality improvements and motivate teachers to participate in different FDP, publication, presentation and research works.

Evidence of success:

The 360-degree Teachers' Appraisal system poses direct impact on the academic quality of an institution. It ensures academic discipline and fixes responsibility not only on teachers but also

on other stakeholders. This college evidenced the following improvements in its teaching, learning and evaluation system.

1. The 360-degree Teachers' Appraisal system helped in reducing the communication gap between the teachers and the students. This is evident from the increasing participation of students in classroom interaction.

2. The system created a healthy competition among the teachers as every teacher is engaged in increase his/her individual score.

3. It has helped to develop a management information system relating the teachers' quality and academic standard of the college.

4. The Teachers' Appraisal system is effective in providing scientific decision-making platform for arranging need-based Faculty Development and Improvement programmes and allowing specific teacher to participate in specific programmes.

5. The system also facilitates information and suggestion of an external peer who is an expert in the field, which is very helpful to the management in formulating strategies for improvements in some specific areas of teaching-learning process of the college.

6. Moreover, it has improved stakeholders' (particularly students') rating and confidence on the institution.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Although, the 360-degree Teachers' Appraisal system has been designed in such a manner that it is capable to capture academic standard data and suggestion for improvements thereon, the college experiences some difficulties in its proper implementation. Some of these are:

1. There exist controversies over selection of set of questionnaires among the formulators.

2. There are also controversies over selection of external peer from specific field.

3. Though the students are made aware of the process and purpose of the system, many of them are shaky to provide their opinion on the teacher's attributes. So, the participation of students in the survey remains less than expected.

4. Some of the students getting influenced by third parties do not provide their appropriate own opinions.

5. As the portal is managed by a third-party software operator and service provider, it is also subject to technical glitches and communication gap.