

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women

(Deemed to be University under Category 'A' by MHRD, Estd. u/s 3 of UGC Act 1956)

Re-accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC. Recognized by UGC under Section 12 B

Coimbatore - 641 043, Tamil Nadu, India

Best Practice 1: Bottom up approach in Academic and Administrative operations

Title of the practice: *connecting the Dots: the Bottom - up Strategic Approach*

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women which has established itself as a university with deemed status since 1988 has been successfully re-engineered its strategic approach from 'Top-Down' to 'Bottom-Up' in order to cater to the needs of various stakeholders of higher education. The vision, mission and objectives of the institute is achieved by adopting a 'bottom-up' approach where the students and faculty members are included in all stages of decision making along with other contributors namely parents, industry experts, alumni, government and non-government bodies and community. This enables the institute to have thorough understanding of the needs and demands at the grass root level and execute the same accordingly.

Objectives of the practice

1. Empowering the individuals or teams.
2. Creating agile and responsive work culture.
3. Greater work commitment and pride of all stake holders thus improving the quality of life.
4. High reliance on the existing processes and procedures.
5. Ensure efficient functioning at all levels from the micro to macro levels.
6. Enhance the morale and explore different ways that could work best to strengthen the collaborative effort.

Context

An institution sets a burning platform of change towards futuristic goals and priorities. The role and the expectations of the internal and external stake holders like Trustees, Top administrators, Teaching faculty, Support staff, Non-teaching members, Students, Parents, Alumni, Industry, Industrial Associations, Government and Community keep changing to accommodate global demands as well as to maintain the Institutional Value Proposition. A transparent, envisioning and sustainable institution is made possible through the inputs from different stakeholders gaining momentum for transformation. This necessitates the institute to apply 'bottom-up' approach as a pivotal effort in enhancing the institutional efficiency and achieve the Vision

through shared opinion and voices. The network of different stakeholders and their participation not only brings in transparent practices in academics and administration but also initiates process improvement from grass root level. In the context of achieving quality assurance with relevance, costs, equity and global standards, the institute proactively engages in bottom-up practices.

The Practice

Administrative Process Improvements

The Institute is a confederation of different faculties governed principally by the Board of Management (BOM). The Board is supported extensively by Planning and Monitoring Board, Finance Committee and other Committees. The Board takes up for discussion and approval various academic and administrative issues that are brought to its purview through various other boards and committees such as Planning and Monitoring Board, Academic council, Finance Committee and Boards of Studies. Students' voice out their opinion through student council and Feedback system regarding infrastructure facilities and other process improvement needed in the institute. Similarly, teaching staffs are involved in department level meeting regarding the fund requirement for various academic and non-academic activities which are carried forward for discussion with the higher authorities and later put forth in the Finance Committee and finally submitted for approval in BOM. The bye-laws, rules and regulations are developed in consultation with other members and are made available in the website which is evidence that the entire Institute's administration is participative and follows bottom-up approach. Other stakeholders also involve themselves through constant feedback system. Various committees like Purchase Committee, Travel Committee, Building Committee, Research Advisory committee are involved in translating the views and suggestions given by various stakeholders into reality through the BOM.

Academic Management Practices

Students engage in various forms - both formal and informal ways (On Students Council, Participation in student satisfaction survey, instant feedback, Interactions in Social Media and alike) to give their suggestions regarding curriculum, facilities, and activities in the institute for their better prospects. Tutor ward systems encourage one to one dialogue with the tutors, where the needs and grievance of individual students are captured. The tutors carry forwards the

suggestions and needs of the students to department meetings and Board of Studies based on their relevance and credibility. The students actively participate in curriculum enhancement wherein the opinion of the students are observed and presented before experts. Such inputs form part of the curriculum thus sharing the ownership of decision making with the students. The research scholars choose and design their own syllabus for the theses papers with the approval of their respective supervisors and it is passed in the Board of Studies.

The academic committees such as Boards of Studies and Academic Council draw experts from industry, senior academicians from other institutions with the internal faculty members in rotation. Each faculty will get an opportunity to share their expertise to build distinctive academic programs. Later, the discussions are approved by the BOM.

The students get high-impact experiences as they work jointly with the faculty members in academic and non-academic activities. Parents, Industry experts, Alumni also provide feedback regarding curriculum and other aspects of the institute and these suggestions are carefully included appropriately.

Evidence of success

This collaborative approach starting from the lower rung (Students, Staff) and ascending up (Administrators) the decision tree, evidently reinforces the satisfaction of all stakeholders which has taken this Institute marching successfully beyond Diamond Jubilee Year. The proud alumni had contributed to construct an Arch in the Third gate in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee Year; Birth Star based Garden; and Scholarships to needy students. This shows the depth of affinity the alumni has upon the institution.

The bottom-up approach facilitates decisions suggested down the line and delegation of authority increases responsibility and accountability. Few changes that have been implemented as a result of such bottom-up approach are as follows:

- **Curricular reforms:** CBCS, Inter-disciplinary and Multi-disciplinary courses are a result of students' needs and voices.
- **E-learning courses:** MOOC, Spoken Tutorials, SWAYAM, E-PG Pathshala and Learning Management System have been introduced to facilitate any time learning.
- **Physical Facilities:** Upgradation of existing infrastructure such as library, laboratory, toilet facilities, foodcourt, games facilities for the benefit of students and staff.

The improvement in the level of responsibility to accept challenges, maintaining the global bench marks in both academic and non academic activities, increased publications, improvement in corporate involvement, active Student Council, automation of academic and administrative activities and higher community engagement are further evidences.

Problems encountered and resources required

Speed in implementation of decision has been a limitation as bottom-up approach involves participation from grass root level. High Involvement of many stakeholders slows down the decision making process. Further, there is lack of strategic control in monitoring the progress which hinders the sustenance of certain working patterns. There is a gap in academic planning and resources mobilization at times as the plans are ambitiously made and could not be supported at later stages. Also non-adoption of certain contemporary technologies such as Mobile technologies has led to slower decision process.

Improved state of art infrastructure and increased investment in technology is needed to further enhance the effectiveness of Bottom-Up approach.

Best practice 2: Inclusive Education

1. Title of the Practice: *Inclusive and Equitable Education – the innate drive of the institute*

‘Inclusive and Equitable Education’ is the ‘Mantra,’ the driving force of higher education in recent times, especially in India. In line with the nation’s goal of ‘education for all’, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women had been practising ‘inclusive and equitable education’ since time immemorial. The institute is committed to the cause of women’s education as is engraved in the Institute’s Vision and Mission.

Vision

Self development and empowerment of women through modern, scientific and value based education to enable them to lead a purposeful life filled with moral and spiritual values.

Mission

To provide quality education of global standards on a strong foundation of Indian values and traditions to women students based on current advances in science, technology and societal demands with emphasis on commitment to social progress, peace, harmony and national integration.

The institute ensures ample opportunities for women students from all sections (caste, creed, religion, special needs) without any discrimination. Being all - women’s institute with complete autonomy and deemed university status, the institute has been successful in implementing ‘inclusiveness and equitableness’ in both formal and nonformal streams of education.

2. Objectives of the Practice (100 words)

The institute has set the following objectives to offer wholesome academic experience for women students from all walks of life:

- Value the presence and engagement of all individual students.
- Admit / enrol women students enabling leverage for students from reserved category, minority groups and vulnerable sections of the society.
- Offer academic programmes to suit the needs of present day women student community which would also fulfil local and global demands.
- Promote both formal and nonformal education.
- Tailor courses / schemes to for persons with special needs.
- Serve the underprivileged women in society.

3. The Context

India is the second most populous country with about 2.21% of disabled population (Census of India, 2011).

The Government has taken several initiatives to provide education to all since independence and the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1996 has advocated that education of special children to be provided along with regular children. Although the Government of India has attempted to create policies that are inclusive for people with disabilities, their implementation efforts have not resulted in a truly inclusive education in India. Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women have been always proactive in addressing this social cause by implementing 'inclusive education' in its true sense. The institute has been a pioneer in the region to offer special education course thereby training human resources to teach special needs children. The institute also fosters 'equitable education' in line with Gandhian ideals by providing 'fairness' and 'inclusion' in higher education. The institute caters to women students of varied socio-economic background without any discrimination.

4. The Practice

Focus on achieving wholesome academic experience from the view point of gynocentric inclusive education had driven the institute to embark on an education mode offering '**inclusive and equitable education**'. Reservation system of Government of India has been strictly followed during admission of students into various programmes. The institute provides preferential treatment to disadvantaged students during admission. Further, need-based scholarships are also provided to disadvantaged students to help them pursue education without much burden.

Teachers follow classroom practices such as individualised attention, tutoring, slow learners coaching and alike in order accommodate learners from different culture, socio-economic background and those with disabilities along with the mainstream education. The institute does not accept any donation or capitation thereby making education affordable for students from low economic background also.

The institute offers quality education to all and inculcates scientific temper, professional / technical skills, vocational training, entrepreneurial skills – all with an eye on developing the students' intellectual, technical, social and emotional well being.

Being a University offering Home Science, Science, Special Education, Physical education, Social Science sand Professional Education (Engineering) under a common umbrella provide added advantage.

All Undergraduate and Postgraduate students are provided access to a a wide range of Programmes / Course options under CBCS system, with Co - curricular, Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, extracurricular and Professional Certification Courses. To cater to the needs

of students from various social background, soft skills / communications skills are provided to their morale and self confidence.

Students are also provided with Add - on and Skill-based courses , offered by the various departments and centres of the university namely Community Education, Dr.Ambedkar Study Centre, Women's' Studies Centre, Life Long Learning, Equal Opportunity Cell, IAS/IPS Coaching, NET/SLET Coaching , Remedial Coaching, ED cell of the University.

Provision to aim higher and complete M.Phil and Ph.D is yet another threshold kept open for empowering all women students.

5. Evidences of Success:

- Teacher Training courses such as B.Ed Special Education (Visual Impairment) and B.Ed Special Education (Hearing Impairment) are successful on-going programmes that train teachers to teach children with disabilities.
- Nineteen undergraduates and fourteen postgraduates were sanctioned Management scholarships.
- A good number of students belonging to Reserved category / Minority groups (201 to be precise) had undergone remedial coaching classes sponsored by the UGC Scheme through Equal Opportunity Cell.
- The Department of Life Long Learning had organized Four Programmes, and Thirty Five Events (Beneficiaries 957 members).
- The NSS Empanelled Training Institution had imparted NSS training to 318 participants belonging Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges / University during the year 2017-18.
- The data presented above are ample proof to showcase the efforts of the Institute to emerge as a successful agent for addressing the issues of gynocentric Inclusive and Equitable Education.

7. Problems Encountered and Resource Required

Inclusive and Equitable education is not that easy as said. The institute faced several challenges in implementing this process:

- **Teacher preparedness:** Teachers were not exposed ways and means of teaching children with disabilities.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** There arises need for ramps, wheelchairs, adequate lighting, special software packages etc for teaching children with disabilities.
- **Teaching Practices:** Teachers have to be oriented with various methodologies for building up an inclusive class room and to accommodate students with various socio-economic background.
- **Academic Gaps:** Being equitable, the institute has to address the issue of students from various economic and social set up. Academic gaps were noticed among students from top graded schools and less graded schools.

Improved infrastructure facilities, Human resource potential, wider linkages, dissemination strategies (through different media), increased hostel rooms and facilities are the resources required to overcome the above said challenges.