

## **Distinctiveness**

### **In Solidarity with the underprivileged**

Motto: Seek, Serve and Liberate

The pinnacle of performance of the institution that is distinctive to its vision, priority and thrust is the community service activity in which the institution joins hands in solidarity with the underprivileged. Students step out of the campus to care homes, class rooms to challenging and from lab to people for realities enlarging their horizons of perception, to renew their relationship with themselves, with their greater suffering brethren, and with the world. This programme is both a teaching as well as a learning method connecting meaningful community service with academic learning, for personal growth, learning civic responsibility and gathering profound intelligence. It blends community service goals and formal and informal educational goals. Serving the underprivileged with love has proved to be mutually beneficial and enriching.

### **Course of the programme**

- Structured time is allotted to experience service goals and learning goals
- This is a mandatory process for all sophomores since 2007. Students embrace it with willingness and happiness
- Sixty villages are covered by students who team up both within and beyond their disciplinary boundaries
- Lot of spade work is done by conducting surveys and collecting information on socio demographic characteristics through questionnaires. Personal details are collected through oral interviews
- Local assistance is sought from NGOs, parishes, local panchayats, institutions and organizations before initiating locality based programmes
- Students are accompanied by staff advisors who assist them in integrating data, perspectives and concepts from multiple disciplines, so as to give creative solutions to problems identified
- Their mantra is “Small things create great impact” - They do what they are good at with sufficient trust, mutual confidence, utmost involvement and joy
- Public transport system is used to access the different villages to instil eco-sensitivity

### **Types of activities**

- Teaching basic skills in English LSRW (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to school kids, tuition classes in other subjects, remedial coaching, basic digital literacy and soft skills
- Awareness talks, medical camps, information on legal rights, banking tips to villagers
- Removal of plastic wastes, e-wastes and eradication of parthenium menace
- Construction of rest rooms. Expansion of green cover, seed and sapling supply  
Training to make jam, pickles, phenyle and other household products

- Swachh Bharath initiatives and philanthropic initiatives
- Prison ministry, counselling, rehabilitation measures
- Observing the “Joy of Giving week”
- Dengue awareness programme, supply of Nilavembu concoction Imparting survival skills, life skills and communication skills
- Teaching basic skills needed for Banking, using library, filling in application forms etc.
- Maintenance and repair of electrical/electronic gadgets and home appliances
- Cooking classes, promoting kitchen gardens and terrace gardens methods to enhance household income
- Street plays to motivate villagers and other target groups
- Cultural programmes, revival of folk arts, teaching computing skills
- Financial aid

### **Beneficiaries**

- School kids, school drop outs, children with dyslexia – Villages: Sundapattivilai, Melasoorankudi and Karthigaivadali
- Abandoned parents, dementia parents, destitutes in care homes and outside - Villages: Sahayapuram, Kanniyakumari, Perunchilambu, Paruthivilai
- Abandoned children -Villages : Punnai Nagar, Kurusady
- Differently abled children, Visually impaired, Hearing impaired and the mentally challenged -Villages :Pampanvilai and Thirupathisaram
- HIV infected/affected adults and children -Villages : Tirunelveli, Putheri Illiterate locals - Villages : Melasoorankudi, Kurusady, Maravankudiyiruppu
- Self Help Groups - Village : Karthigaivadali Convicts/alcoholics/sex workers –Sub jail, rural villages, Achankulam
- City beautifiers (Municipality sweepers) Victims of domestic violence – Neighbouring villages Child victims of incest/child labour/domestic violence/abuse/rape - Village: North Soorankudi and Rural areas
- People with terminal illness in palliative care centres – Villages : Chinnavilai, Manavalakurichi
- Teenagers in underpaid jobs /exploited workforce in private firms and companies – Nagercoil

### **Impact on students**

- They evolve from a narrow perception to a broader and wider understanding of human existence
- They get integrated into community with confidence, purpose and with a sense of respect
- They experience a value based atmosphere in which they are encouraged, motivated, listened to and valued

- They step out from their confines and gadgets and enter the doorstep of pain, poverty, death, disease and suffering
- They become more responsible and rope in their own families; friends and well-wishers into this venture thereby transform themselves as facilitators
- As wealth, well-being and blessings come with a great responsibility, they re-orient their lives by shifting priorities
- Their affective, cognitive domains are set ablaze with love and compassion
- Peace values, when practised, give them sustainable happiness

In short they learn “to be”, “to live together”, “to do” and “to know”. They shed discriminating practices, become life sensitive, touch a dimension beyond boundaries and become eternal seekers.

### **Impact on destitutes/marginalized/socially ostracized**

- Target respondents learn more about themselves and the resources available at hand through questionnaires
- Vulnerable people meet their core material needs for basic physiological functioning from their own resources
- Providing beds, hot meals, helping them to shower and lending a listening ear have helped them change their quality of life, boost their self-esteem and pick up the lost strands of life
- Generosity and compassion have put many ‘back on their feet’ Nutritional, financial and psychological assistance have helped HIV infected/affected victims to overcome the relentless social and cultural barriers
- School drop outs due to grade retention, disengagement from school, financial constraints etc., get a new lease of life Visible positive health impacts seen in abandoned elders

### **Impact on green initiatives**

- Villagers have turned into eco-stewards. They compost, recycle, reuse and reduce pollution at source
- They have ditched disposables, put up roof gardens, use natural pesticides, plant saplings, eat scientifically and develop healthy living practices
- Have rain water harvesting pits, use renewable sources of energy, protect lichens and develop clean habits

### **Impact on Self-help groups**

- They participate in marketplace trade, have their own start-ups, become more enterprising and elevate the rural economy
- They negotiate with local authorities for their rights and entitlements

- City beneficiaries have learnt their rehabilitation rights, claim scholarship for their children, avail concessional loans for taking up alternative occupations and building homes and seek stipends
- Many have re-oriented their lives towards betterment