

7.2 Best Practices

Describe at least two institutional best practices

Upload details of two best practices successfully implemented by the institution as per NAAC format in your institution website, provide the link

1. **Title of Best Practice-1:**

Access to Justice for all

2. **Objectives of the Practice:**

Access to justice is recognized as a Fundamental Right under Article 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution of India. In *Anita Kushwaha v. Pushap Sudan*, [(2016) 8 SCC 509] the Supreme Court categorically asserts:

“We have, therefore, no hesitation in holding that access to justice is indeed a facet of right to life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. We need only add that access to justice may as well be the facet of the right guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws.”

Through their legal education, law students become efficient participants in this quest for access to justice for all, which is an endeavour to materialize the ideals set out by the Preamble and the obligation of the State under Article 39A of the Constitution of India. The Legal Care & Support Centre (Legal Aid Clinic), Shillong Law College (the Centre), shares this Constitutional vision and has become a humble part of this endeavour.

The Centre aims at achieving the objectives laid down by the provision of section 4(k) of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, i.e., to improve the clinical skills of the students and to encourage them to provide free and competent legal services to the poor and indigent who are eligible under section 12 of the Act.

To achieve these objectives, the Centre, under the aegis of the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) and the District Authority (DLSA, East Khasi Hills), has been involving the students of the College in organising various related activities and programmes as outlined in the *NALSA (Legal Services Clinics in Universities, Law Colleges and other Institutions) Scheme, 2013* and the *National Legal Services Authority (Legal Aid Clinics) Scheme, 2010*.

3. **Context:**

Justice is a universal aspiration, and the sense of justice is a powerful human emotion. “Access to justice is basic to human rights and directive principles of State Policy become ropes of sand, teasing illusion and promise of unreality, unless there is effective means for the common people to reach the Court, seek remedy and enjoy the fruits of law and justice.” (Justice V. Krishna Iyer). Article 39A of the Constitution of India ensures equal justice and free legal aid. The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

4. **The Practice:**

For the purpose of achieving the above objectives, The Legal Care and Support Centre was established in the Shillong Law College by the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority in the year 2013. Since then, the Centre has been taking up various activities benefitting both the students of the college and other beneficiaries including women, children, SCs, STs and victims of Covid-19.

Activities in 2022 & 2023:

- a. 26th March, 2022: Students attended the Para-Legal Volunteers Training Programme.
- b. 31st Oct., 2022: Formation of the new Committee for Legal Aid of the college, with

students as core members;

- c. 7th Nov., 2022: Students participated in the Mega Legal Services Camp at Smit village on the occasion of the Legal Services Week, 2022;
- d. 8th Nov., 2022: Street Play performed by students at Myriaw village, West Khasi Hills District;
- e. 9th Nov., 2022: Legal Awareness Programme & Street Play at Nongpoh, Ri Bhoi District, commemorating Legal Services Day;
- f. 26th May., 2023: One-Day Awareness-cum-Orientation Programme for Student-Volunteers on Article 39A of the Constitution of India;
- g. 29th Sept., 2023: Students attended the Training Programme for Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs), organised by the District Legal Services Authority, East Khasi Hills District;
- h. 25th Nov., 2023: Programme on “Observation of Constitution Day” at the college campus. The Centre along with the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority, the NSS Unit and the Equal Opportunity Cell of the Shillong Law College in collaboration with the High Court Legal Services Committee & the District Legal Services Authority, EKHD, organised the programme to mark the 74th year of the Adoption of the Constitution of India.

Following is highlight of Programmes and activities the Centre has undertaken since the year of its establishment:

- a. Legal awareness camps in the town and villages;
- b. Programmes for the youth, the school children and women;
- c. Street plays in public/market places;
- d. The Centre has assisted the State/District Legal Services Authority from time to time in the training of Para Legal Volunteers, survey, legal services camps, and other related services;
- e. The Centre has helped the illiterate beneficiaries in the drafting of FIRs, Complaints and filling up of forms;
- f. It has performed other activities like giving legal/initial advices to the beneficiaries;
- g. Other activities the Centre has undertaken include:
 - i. Assisting youth who lost job due to Covid-19,
 - ii. Assisting victims of accident in the hospital,
 - iii. Visit to an old age institution
 - iv. Jail visit. Students of the college have been deputed to attend the jail legal aid clinic at the District jail, Shillong, for the purpose of rendering free legal services to jail inmates.
- h. Student-volunteers participating in various activities of the Centre have been issued Certificates of Participation and Prizes for winners of competitions.
- i. The Centre has also been instrumental in having the faculties of the college collaborated with the District/State Authority as resource persons in various programmes, like:
 - (a) Legal awareness programmes,
 - (b) Training-cum-sensitization programmes,
 - (c) Training of Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs) in East Khasi Hills District,
 - (d) Interviews/talks in All India Radio (Shillong) and Doordarshan Kendra (DDK), Shillong, in their programme 'Kanoon Ki Baat' [*To Tip ia ki Ain*] in the local language. The AIR and DDK programmes include public awareness on the various Schemes initiated by the NALSA.

5. Evidence of Success:

Students are taking keen interest in this practice. It is evident through their active participation in the activities and programmes of the Legal Care and Support Centre. It is particularly seen in their leadership quality, learning and development of their skills in handling legal services matters. On the other hand, the ultimate beneficiaries are the general public including the women, children, orphans, SCs, STs and the illiterate.

6. Problems encountered:

Shortage of manpower: Only one fulltime faculty is appointed in-charge of the Centre. With a number of classes per day coupled with other college responsibilities, this is a constraint on the efficient functioning of the Centre.

Lack of incentives for students: it may be mentioned that students should be adequately compensated/remunerated for the expenses they incurred while participating in the activities of the Centre. Expenses include travelling, food, refreshments, and such other expenses connected with their legal services.

Lack of incentives for faculty in-charge: the services of a faculty in-charge should be acknowledged, recognised (even remunerated), for instance, as a criterion for promotion, etc.

1. Title of Best Practice-2:
“Not Me But You”

2. Objectives of the Practice:

The National Service Scheme (NSS) is an education through practices. The student needs to complete a 240 hours social service in duration of two years with one special camp. The following are the objectives of the NSS:

- To inculcate students to reach out to the masses especially the rural and slum areas to bring them at par with the rest of the society.
- To develop among themselves a sense of social and civic responsibility.
- To gain skills in mobilizing community participation.
- To identify the needs and problems of the community and involve the students in problem-solving
- To help NSS volunteers to acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes.

Therefore, in order to achieve these objectives, the NSS Shillong Law College Unit involved the NSS volunteers of the College in organized and observed various related activities in an around Shillong and its adopted village.

3. Context:

Education through services is the purpose of NSS. The duty of the NSS Programme Officer is to act as a Motivator, an educator, a supervisor and as a public relation person. Each NSS volunteers will have to undergo an orientation programme which will help students to understand the concept of NSS. Furthermore, the students after completion of 240 hours of community service along with special camp will get a certificate of completion.

4. The Practice:

For the purpose of achieving the above objectives, the NSS plan programs and carry out their plans. This is evident in the link given below for the activities conducted during the year 2022-2023 .

link:-<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AzwlTCufW-BMSR8yQyFzOyHz3WHDqQB2/view?usp=sharing>

5. Evidence of Success:

The NSS volunteers actively participated in all the activities organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and observed important International and National Days. It is evident through their active participation that the NSS volunteers received awards and recognition.

6. Problems encountered:

The problems encountered was that the NSS have various activities to cope up, however students have to attend classes with 75% attendance with makes its difficult with attending classes. Another problem encountered is financial constraint as the amount sanctioned is not enough for programmes organized.