

BEST PRACTICE 1

Title of the Practice: **Learning through Spiritual Development**

Objectives of the Practice: Morigaon College has adopted the practice of learning through spiritual development keeping in view the following objectives:

- To provide the students a spiritual environment in the college congenial to academic development.
- To impart moral teachings to the students for character building and controlling of conduct and behavior with the experience of spiritual learning.
- To engender in the students a sense of responsibility and duty towards the society.
- To teach the students, the values of national integration and patriotism thereby moulding them as future citizens of the country.
- To enhance the spirit of tolerance among the students.

The Context: An institution of higher education has its major objective in imparting knowledge and ideas. At the same time, such an institution conforms to its vision and mission to achieve the desired goals successfully. Morigaon College is no exception in this regard. The college gives utmost priority to offer the best education to its students. The college believes that attaining a degree or certificate from a university is not the ultimate objective of a student. Character building and cultivating human values is also a vital objective of higher education. To reach this goal, Morigaon College puts emphasis on learning through spiritual development. According to Indian belief-systems, behavioural reforms can be achieved through spiritual teaching only. The increasing rate of crimes, violence against women and juvenile crimes-all bear testimony to the fact that the young generation is in need of moral and spiritual education. From the appalling 'Nirvaya' episode of Delhi to the lynching of Abhi-Neel in Assam, a number of crimes are associated with the youth. Being a higher education institute, Morigaon College cannot ignore its social responsibility of providing proper and well directed education to the young minds. To achieve this objective, the college is adopting the spirit of learning through spiritual development. Right from the moment of entering the college gate, a student gains spiritual consciousness and college takes every care to make them feel so. Through inculcation of morality and spirituality. Morigaon College gives its students an environment where they can attain learning through spiritual development. In the morning, classes start at 9 am. The college has cleaners and by 8.30 am, they clean the entire college campus. When a student enters the college in the morning its cleanliness gives a mind refreshing atmosphere which in turn,

motivates the students to concentrate on their studies. Stepping into the college campus, the first thing the students can notice is a white board presenting the 'Thought for the day'. Quotations, thoughts and wise sayings on moral conduct and education by scholars, saints, philosophers across the world are displayed on the board. With the reading of such quotes, a student attains spiritual, ethical and moral enlightenment. On reaching the veranda of the main building, the students next notice Deepa (lighting of earthen lamps) on both side of the entrance along with incense sticks. The Deepa and incense sticks create a spiritual atmosphere which completely refreshes the body and soul of a student. The regular class of Morigaon College starts at 9 am and at 8.55 am the National anthem or the state anthem is played on the central sound system. The central sound system covers the entire college campus and so students in every nook and corner of the college can hear the anthem. This is the time for Morning Prayer. Taking into account the diversity of the students of different religions, caste and creed, the college does not play any religious prayer during that time. Instead, the state anthem of Assam (o mur apunar desh - composed by Lakshminath Bezbarua) or the national anthem of India is played. At the time of playing of the state or the national anthem, the students and the teachers stand erect in their place. This activity certainly develops a spirit of patriotism and a sense of national integrity and togetherness among the students. After this the regular classes start and the students enter their classroom with a positive and spirited mind for the days' proceedings.

Evidence of Success: Morigaon College considers learning through spiritual development to be a best practice of the institution. It has a lot of positive effect on the academic and other associated areas which are very distinctive. First, spiritual learning has its impact on academic field. The practice of learning through spiritual development directly puts impact on concentration of students. This is ultimately reflected in the result of the college. The study of the last five years' result shows that the pass percentage of the college is always higher than that of the university as a whole. Second, with the adoption of this practice the behavior and conduct of the students have massively changed which is a prime objective of the practice. In the last five years Grievance Redressal Cell, Sexual Harassment cell, Anti-ragging Cell of Morigaon College received very few complaints. This is considered as the result of moral learning and a direct outcome of the practice which is a tremendous achievement for college in maintaining good academic environment. Third, in college functions such as Fresher's social, College week, Students' Union Election and in celebration of various festivals, the students show discipline and earnest sincerity and attention which is acclaimed by the guests (who are invited to the college as resource-persons/speaker on different occasions) and society of Morigaon. Being a co-educational institute, Morigaon College has almost equal number of male and female students. The students display a sense of love, compassion, patience, tolerance. Concern for others and respect for women is reflected in their behaviour and conduct. This is another positive result of the practice.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: There are constraints and limitations in every system. The practice of learning through spiritual development adopted by Morigaon College is also no exception in this regard. Every year, a large number of students get their names enrolled here in three Streams-Arts, Science and Commerce. To bring all the students together at the same time, for this specific purpose is not an easy task. It has its distinctive challenges. Nevertheless, all challenges are to be welcomed while realizing an activity that aims at moral and spiritual edification of the student community.

NOTES A person without moral education is a flower without fragrance. Learning through spiritual development is an activity that should be introduced in every educational institution either through specific courses or daily practices to inculcate moral and spiritual values. Morigaon College has taken an appreciable step by introducing this practice and this could be emulated by other colleges as well.

BEST PRACTICE 2

Title of the Practice: **Annual Book Fair in Campus**

Objectives of the Practice: The book fair organized yearly under the aegis of Morigaon College, aims at infusing a ‘culture of reading’ among the students of the college in particular and the rural youth in general. Another objective of the fair is to make reading a fascinating and absorbing activity, to control the growing fascination of the students for smart phones and other electronic gazettes. “A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies.” writes George R.R. Martin. This practice is also aimed at moulding the minds of the young generation through the wealth of knowledge offered by the world of books. The practice aims at mental stimulation, stress reduction, knowledge aquisition, vocabulary expansion, improving concentration and strengthening analytical and reasoning skills of the students through the habit of reading. The Context: Morigaon College is situated in a rural backdrop where the economy is largely agro-based. A large number of students are first generation college goers. There are only a few book stores in Morigaon town and one district library. The stock of the latter largely comprises of books in local Assamese language. To avail the facilities of a well equipped book store/library, the students of the region have to travel to Guwahati. This proves to be a cumbersome and tiring task. Moreover, the book stores in Morigaon town provide syllabus oriented text/reference books only. Book fairs are seldom held in Morigaon District. Therefore, to foster the charm of reading of books among the rural youth, the college organizes a book fair yearly during Freshers’ Social or College Week. The fair is held by the college authority in close association with

Gurucharan Medhi Central Library and Morigaon College Students' Union. This practice was started in the year 2015.

The Practice: To organize the annual book fair, initiative is taken by the college authority and staff of Gurucharan Medhi Central library. The fair is held in the college campus and a number of publishers are invited to participate in the book fair, which starts on the inaugural day of Freshers' Social/College Week. Jagaran Sahitya Prakashan, Eastern Book House, Purbanchal. Prakash, Nivedita Book Distributors, Oxford University Press, Lakshi Publishers, New Delhi, Mittal Publication, Bani Prakashan and others, are regular participants of the book fair. Apart from prescribed texts and references, a large number of books on literature, science, living values, management sciences, commerce, best sellers, classics, dictionaries, encyclopedias, research-oriented books, competitive examination guide books, fiction and others are offered to the visitors. The students get an opportunity to explore the wealth of a wide array of books in different languages viz. English, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi. Different departments of the college also get an opportunity to purchase necessary books which are thereafter stocked in Gurucharan Medhi Central Library. On 10 and 11 September, 2015, the book fair was organized for the first time along with Freshers' Social. Mr. Mukunda Nath Hazarika, retired faculty member of Kampur College and senior reporter, inaugurated the book fair on 10 September. On 2016, the fair was organized from 24-28 January and inaugurated by the Principal Dr. Lila Kanta Barthakur. Students from different colleges and schools located nearby visited and purchased books from the book fair. In the year 2017, the fair was held during Freshers' Social on 15 and 16 November. Mr. Haren Bora, Former MLA and eminent social worker inaugurated the fair on the first day of Freshers' Social. In 2018, the fair was held during Freshers' Social on 7 and 8 September. It was inaugurated by Mr. Pratap Hazarika, President, All Assam Rural Libraries Association and senior journalist. During the inaugural programme, the students are exhorted to inculcate reading habit for better thinking and better living.

Evidence of Success: Taking into account the overwhelming response on the part of the students in the first year of book fair, the college authority decided to open the fair to students of all colleges and schools in Morigaon town. With the broadening of the target group in the succeeding year, the number of visitors increased substantially. The growing number of visitors is in itself an evidence of the success of this practice initiated by Morigaon College. It is a healthy step taken by the college in striving to build a book-loving society. College library is benefitted by the book fair as it gets an opportunity to update its stock. The stock of library books has substantially increased and it provides an opportunity to the teachers of various departments to select the required and necessary books for the use of students. Above all, the most positive impact of this practice is reflected in the increasing number of library users. Students' participation and classroom interaction has considerably increased with the increase in concentration, analytical and reasoning skill fostered through reading.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Most of the publishers and booksellers are Guwahati based. For expansion of the domain and range of books, publishers of other states are yet to be attracted. Constraint of space is another problem encountered in organizing the book fair as classrooms and halls are used to display the books. A wider space would make the fair more attractive. The duration of the book fair needs to be increased so that the visitors get ample time to browse through the books. The fund provided for organizing the fair needs to be increased for holding the fair on a grand scale.

NOTES This is a healthy practice aimed at promoting reading habit among the youth. Comprehension skills and ability to articulate thoughts are improved through reading. This practice could be adopted by other educational institutions as well. Moreover, Morigaon College could work in collaboration with other colleges of Morigaon town in organizing the fair on a larger scale.