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ECOFRIENDLY COLLEGE CAMPUS: A GREEN SUSTAINABLE APPROACH (NAAC PERSPECTIVE)

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Abstract

According to Merriam-Webster, the term eco-friendly is, “not environmentally harmful.” Environmentally friendly, eco-friendly, earth-friendly, nature-friendly and green are some synonymous ways of saying "not environmentally harmful." Sustainable or sustainability means "the practice of making sure we don't deplete our natural resources while maintaining a prospering economy for future generations," says Aral. Usually a college campus is the composition of Administrative blocks, Classrooms, Laboratories, Library, Sport complex, Hostels, Canteen, Leisure parks, NCC and NSS units, open ground, Latrines, Parking blocks etc. To imbibe sustainable and green approach among the society, the college is the best place. There are many ways (Inclusion of Environmental studies course at graduation, starting some eco-friendly projects in campus like, Vermicompost, Biogas plant, and solar energy, Plantation drives, Sewage treatment plant (STP), Solid waste management, e-waste management, Rain-water harvesting, Vehicle-free campus and No vehicle Day, Nature and Adventure Clubs, Field visits, Study tours, organization of webinars, seminars, conferences regarding environmental protection and sustainable development, MoUs, Linkages and out-reach programmes, study of floral and faunal diversity of college campus etc.) by which we can aware the students and in turn society about environment and natural resources. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has given special emphasis in their accreditation process to maintain clean, green and sustainable college campus.

Keywords: *Eco-friendly, MoUs, NAAC, Natural resources, Sustainable development.*

Introduction:

‘Green’, the word which is extensively used now a days. The ‘Sustainable development’ and ‘Green’ are the two sides of the same coin. Slogans of green or greenery, green buildings, green transportation, green agriculture, green campus etc. meets the sustainable development (Nulkar, 2014). Gross infringements by humans leads to environmental harm (Orenstein et al., 2019). Extensive use of natural resources results in climate change, which reflects in natural environment and all living things (Ghoshal, 2011). The leading educational institutes in India viz. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi as well as universities around the world have adopted strategic concept in dealing with environment, sustainability and the green trend in their classes and teaching

courses (Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar, 2008).

Environmental sustainability is the process of maintaining changes in environment to meet stakeholder's needs and aspirations, in which all the changes are enhances with both current and future potential. As per the Brundtland commission in UN in 1987, sustainability is ‘improving the quality of human life and ensuring the capacity to support the ecosystem (<http://en.wikipedia.org>)’. ‘Sustainable educational campuses’ aims to build capacity among youth to assess environmental impact and take alleviation measures in their colleges and universities through environmental, energy and green auditing of the campuses. The project based learning (PBL) with special emphasis on floral and faunal diversity, restoration of habitats or ecosystems, sharing and learning best practices through participation in events like conferences and

seminars create positive impact to meet sustainable development.

Activities to Maintain Eco-Friendly College Campus:

1. A Course on Environmental Studies:

A compulsory course on environmental studies should be included at graduation level with learning objectives: To understand key concepts from economic, political, and social analysis as they pertain to the design and evaluation of environmental policies and institutions. To adopt concepts and methods from ecological, chemical and physical sciences and their application in environmental problem solving. Students will be able to understand ways in which their lifestyle and well-being are interconnected with those of diverse producers and consumers around the world and its relation with environment.

2. Vermicomposting Unit:

Vermicomposting is environmentally friendly and is widely used in agriculture. College campus is the place, where we can collect large amount of leaf litters, which can be recycled with Vermicomposting unit. College can organize awareness programmes on organic farming for farmers in collaboration with *Grampanchayat, Nagarpanchayat* or Municipal Corporation.

3. Biogas Plant:

Biogas plant is an artificial system, where we can turn waste into sustainable energy with positive effects on environment. Use of kitchen as well as hostel canteen waste can be recycled and biogas can be utilized for hostels and canteens.

4. Campus Audits:

Campus audits include green audit, environmental audit and energy audit. Overall survey and campus monitoring should be done once in a year and data regarding College infrastructure, campus plant census, waste management (solid, liquid and e-waste), health and hygiene, plantation drives, Number of Solar lamps in the campus, sewage treatment plant (STP) at the Hostels and canteens, activities conducted through NSS and NCC, training and awareness programmes conducted under environmental awareness committee etc. should be compiled and kept for future needs.

5. No Vehicle Day:

At-least once in a week ‘No vehicle day’ should be there in the college. The parking

places for two wheelers and four wheelers probably out of campus to maintain vehicle free campus.

6. Nature and Adventure Club:

Department of Zoology, Botany and Geography can collaboratively establish ‘Nature and Adventure Club’. Student and Faculty registration will keep this club active. Faculty tours at forests, Historical places, wetlands, biodiversity centers as well as student’s tours at Zoological parks, National sanctuaries, GIS centers, Forests to study forest ecosystem should arrange as per the rules and regulations laid down by institute. Trekking, Scuba diving, Mountain safari, Rafting, Rock climbing, Camping etc. can be organized as per their suitability.

7. Celebration of Environment-related days:

To create awareness among students, institute should prepare a calendar containing various environment-conservation days, like Ozone Day, Environment Day, Wildlife Day, Wildlife Week, Wetland Day, Sparrow Day etc. On these occasion Guest lectures, poster presentation, Exhibition of Medicinal plants, Essay competition, Slogan competition, wildlife photography competition, field visits should be organized to inculcate environment consciousness among students.

8. Organization of Webinars/ Seminars/ Conferences:

Institute can organize webinars, Seminars or/and Conferences in online/ offline/ hybrid mode related to environmental issues with maximum focus on student participation. Resource persons associated to Governmental or Non-Governmental organizations from India and abroad should be invited and to create environmental consciousness among students.

9. MoUs and Linkages:

Institute should take strong initiative to sign MoUs and Linkages with various firms associated with environmental fields to cooperate in various activities, including joint educational, training and/ or research activities, exchange of scholars. Faculties, resource personnel to exchange the information and practical training. The MoUs acts as the foundation for future student exchange agreements

10. Project Based Learning (PBL):

PBL is one of the best learning method in which students are actively participated and gain the knowledge through learning by doing. Special level students and PG students can study the floral and faunal diversity of college campus. These studies will create excellent record of campus biodiversity.

11. Rain water Harvesting:

Rain water harvesting is one of the sustainable way to conserve water. College campus includes Administrative block, Library, Laboratories, Classrooms, Hostels, Canteen, Sport complex, Staff quarters, Parking blocks etc. All the roof tops should connect with pipeline and rain water should be collect to recharge groundwater table or sub-surface zone. This water will utilize for campus plants as per requirement.

Conclusion:

Environment and sustainability is one of the important cross-cutting issues in NAAC process. To maintain eco-friendly college campus and pollution-free teaching-learning environment, institute should follow maximum measures to keep the college campus clean and green. Institute should have various environment-friendly slogans in their campus. MoUs with ZSI (Zoological Survey of India), BSI (Botanical Survey of India), NGOs like BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society), forest and Tourism departments, Sanctuaries, Nurseries, etc. will create excellent platform to maintain all the above mentioned practices live.

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