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## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

**IQAC CELL**

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## Historical Background of Extension Activities

India has a tradition of extension education of *Gurukul* system. A '*Gurukul*' (Sanskrit *Guru* "teacher" or "master"; *kul* domain, from *kula*, "extended family") is a type of residential school in India where, pupils (*shishya*) live near the *Guru*, often in the same house. In a *gurukul*, *shishyas* live together as equals, irrespective of their social standing, learn from the guru and help him in his day-to-day life, including the chores such as washing clothes, cooking, etc. The *guru-shishya* tradition (*parampara*) is a hallowed one in Hinduism and appears in other religious groups in India, such as Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Typically, a *guru* does not receive any fees from his *shishyas*. At the end of studies, a *shishya* offers *gurudakshina* before leaving the "*gurukul*" or *ashram*.

The *gurudakshina* is a traditional gesture of acknowledgment, respect and thanks to the guru, which may be money or something the teacher wants the student to accomplish. While in a *gurukul* the students stay away from his house and family completely.<sup>12</sup>

Life at the *Gurukul* was tough, disciplined, and full of hard work and concentration. However, at the end of their training, the students emerge responsible individuals learned and capable of facing the toughest challenges of life. In those times, *GURU* did not admit anybody and everybody as their 'disciples' or "*SHISYAS*". The *GURU* first tested and identified the capacity of *shishya*. Only then did he agree to teach them.

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After attending their duties and classes, shishyas used to go to nearby habitations to seek food and other essential items for their teachers (*Gurus*) and themselves. The aims of this practice seem, not just save unnecessary economic burden, but also maintain the link between the academic community and society. It appears that the practice facilitated knowing the needs of the community. Despite the possession of wealth in the form of cows, *dakshina*, voluntary contributions of disciples and donations and patronage by rulers, the practice of sending disciples to villages was to know the life of the people-their pain and pleasures. In this context, one can assume that it was a prototype of campus community relation, as propounded by NSS in our education system.

The manual attempts to trace the origin of extension education from the ancient *gurukul* system up to the contemporary period. The ultimate objective is to channelize youth energy for the national reconstruction by revamping higher education using the facilitating medium of NSS in Kerala.

On the lines of “Lab to Land” programme, 1979 of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), NSS is a “campus to community” programme under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.<sup>1</sup> Now, NSS has been accepted as one of the important programmes in the ‘New Education Policy’, 1986 and is a befitting tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, who inspired students to go beyond the campus, live with the community and learn from them.

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Traditionally, teaching receives the utmost importance in colleges, and researches in universities. Extension is seldom considered significant with the exceptions of a very few courses. The higher education system has now recognized, in principle, the importance of extension work. However, it is yet to be institutionalized for academic acceptance and recognition of the society. Here, the attempt is to pay attention to the extension component of higher education. Extension activities are student-centered programme complementary to education. It is a noble experiment in academic extension. It inculcates the spirit of voluntary work among students and teachers through sustained community interaction.<sup>2</sup> It brings our academic institutions closer to the society. It is a link between the campus and the community, college and village, knowledge and action. The overall aim of this is the Personality Development of Students through Community Service. It gives an extension dimension to higher education system and orient the student youth to community service.

Extension work, the third dimension of education, plays a vital role for bringing about a social transformation. The Extension Education Programme has been introduced through various activities like NSS, YMT, Health Camps, rallies etc. Under the auspices of this , teachers and students visit underprivileged sections of the community near educational institutions. Sometimes, they involve in developmental programmes at far-off places hit by natural disasters. example, recently, NSS organised relief and rehabilitation activities for Tsunami victims of Kerala in 2004.<sup>3</sup> The programmes were

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service-oriented focusing participatory experiences and exposure to bring together “Campus” and the “Community”. Thus, as co-learners adapting extension work, it is certainly an effective educational opportunity, to develop student volunteers personality.

The educational institutions and teachers have a well-defined role in this regard to offer their selfless services and also by their conduct inspire their students engage in extension activities in pursuance of the mission. The students have to realize the dignity of manual labour and make themselves available for the service of the people in distress. The purpose of this is development of the personality of student volunteers through community service. It extends the fruits of higher education from the campus to the wider community. Community service is a voluntary affair and one spends time and energy apparently without any material compensation. The ultimate aim is to ensure that an attitude change has occurred practicing Educational Extension Programme (EEP) in the teaching learning process.

The other components include:

- (a) Creating public awareness in social issues,
- (b) Imparting education to the deprived sections through non-formal educational programme
- (c) Developing curricular linkages between fieldwork and action.

It is thus a welcome initiative of extension units equally encouraging teachers are highly willing to contribute to social affairs to mitigate the sufferings of victims and eradicate social evils.<sup>4</sup>

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Extension education also covers activities related to rural and urban community development that grows from the needs of the people, and thus considered community education. For example: sensitisation programme on blood donation. The extension education is being developed as a specific field including research, teaching and field activity. Extension education as a discipline started in India in early 1950s. It was introduced as a part of undergraduate teaching programme in agriculture. Therefore, the need to train teachers in the domain of the extension knowledge was felt.

### **Objectives of Extension Education**

Extension is generally conceived at two levels: **1.Extension education and 2. Extension service.** These two levels of extension are interrelated, simultaneously maintaining their separate identity. For example, the NSS extension work provides learning experience to student volunteers and service to the community at the grassroot level. However, the fundamental objective of extension is to develop the rural people economically, socially and culturally by means of education. The general objectives of extension are:

- To assist people to discover and analyse their problems and identify their felt needs.
- To develop leadership among people and help them in organizing groups to solve their problems.
- To disseminate research information of economic and practical importance, useful for the people.

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- To assist people in mobilizing available resources.
- To collect and transmit feedback information for solving management problems.<sup>8</sup>

The philosophy of extension and practiced it in different fields, as

- The students reaches people to practice them.
- Teaching is inadequate until the knowledge is put into practice.
- Teaches, educates, and stimulates people through local leaders.
- Utilizes assistance of voluntary leaders.
- Solves the problems based on the felt needs through group action.
- Dignifies farm, home and family.
- Holds that changed man is more important than changed practice.
- Extension personnel have the right attitude, integrity and sense of service.

The Education Commissioner's Report (1964-66) states that,

“The image of the university as a closed academic community of scholars, creating and disseminating knowledge and perpetuating its own type is a thing of the past. The walls which divide the gown and the town have crumbled and the life of the university and that of the community can be vitally linked for their mutual enrichment.”<sup>13</sup>

Extension primarily aims at establishing links with the community to identify their needs and problems so that science and technological knowledge, ethics and morals, politics and administration, business and trade development generated in higher

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education institutions is best utilized in fulfilling public demand and resolving their problems.

University extension represents attempts to extend educational opportunities to those who were unable to attend higher learning institutions and to render specialized educational services to different sections of society. The development of Research and Development programme for the education system is also a special responsibility of the universities.

In the higher education system, the functions assigned are based on production and sharing of knowledge within the system, increased access to theoretical knowledge and much less testing of their socio-economic viability. If knowledge sharing has to be broad based and the knowledge generated has to be tested, extension must be considered a major approach to accomplish the objectives.

The UGC set the following objectives.<sup>22</sup>

- To enable the universities to establish the necessary linkage with the community to foster social change through meaningful relationship and interactions, which are mutually beneficial by offering need-based and relevant educational programmes that may ultimately facilitate self-reliance.
- To provide opportunities for disseminating knowledge in all walks of life in different segments of population to enable individuals and groups to fill up the gaps in their intellectual growth, professional and technical competence and understanding of contemporary issues.



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- To cater the needs of all sections of society but specially the needs of the underprivileged sections in order to secure effective participation in development process.
- To enrich higher education by integrating continuing and adult education programmes and extension work in the system and thus providing opportunities to remove isolation.
- To provide an opportunity to the faculty and the students to an exposition of field experiences and to sensitize them with the problems and realities
- Faculty and students participation in Extension Research and Action Research in selected areas in relation to major problems of development in cooperation with Government agencies.

Strategy-wise, they propose an eight-fold approach

- Programs for SC/ST/backward Classes
- Continuing Education for women
- Workers' Education
- Continuing Education for professionals and Para-professionals
- Continuing education for business executives
- School drop-outs and unemployed youth
- Continuing education for slum dwellers and migrant workers
- Social development education for all citizens

The review report of the UGC concluded with a call to develop an “Extension

Culture”.<sup>23</sup> The college has to become a catalyst in the future learning society, a centre of education and development of the students and community through both formal and non-formal means. The students would use the community as a social laboratory for their practical, moral and attitudinal education and learn by working in and serving the community. Extending education beyond the campus to fulfill the needs of the cited eight segments of the developmental problems of the community, the NSS has been discharging its duties in Kerala dealt in detail in the chapter 4 namely *Activities, Achievements and Success Stories*.

### **Public Image of Extension**

Extension is often mistaken for community social service. In fact, it is a participatory interactive learning where all the participants are in the learning process. The teachers, students and the community members are benefited through exchange of experiences, experiments, expertise and exercises. It aims at:

- ❖ Developing relationship between colleges/universities, the school systems and the communities;
- ❖ Working collectively for identifying the needs and problems fulfilling the needs and resolving problems are facilitated by exchanging locally available resources.
- ❖ Bringing about effective learning exchanges for all teachers, students and community.

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In other words, extension is a learning process, a process in which knowledge with the teachers and students, and the community, are exchanged for mutual benefit. The socio-cultural milieu of the community, their needs and problems are studied by the teachers to work towards generating knowledge required by community. Similarly, the knowledge generated and gained through learning and research in the higher educational institutions are experimented and tested for utility.

### **Benefits to Students**

- Dignity of labour: As part of the camp students serve the fulfillment of the campus project. This has been an opportunity to sensitize them on the dignity of labour.
- Awareness on village life.
- Rural students learn from camps in the slum area.
- Living together for Ten/Seven days make them learn more about human relationship and mode of interaction required at different levels of association.
- Talented students who organize and work with people are usually elected leaders for various camp functions thereby learning leadership qualities.
- Opportunity to know the needs, problems and way of life of the people during camp days.
- Sense of achievement

### **Benefit of the community**

- Construction of new road to link villages and the main road.
- Repairing of already existing road
- Cleaning of tanks
- Deepening tanks for water storage and to solve problems of water scarcity.
- Improved cleanliness and sanitation through construction of toilets, cleaned drainage system and drugged soak pits to keep the surroundings clean.
- Medical facilities were made accessible to the villages through government voluntary agencies.
- Awareness on importance of education and literacy through cultural programs.
- Awareness of rights and responsibilities.

The NSS is aimed at providing opportunities to the students to gain valuable practical experience in community service and to break the walls that divided the institutions of higher learning from the common people that the students are moulded better citizens. After a thorough analysis of the extension dimension of higher education, it is well established that as a single and all India level agency, the NSS has been contributing significantly in making higher education at the doorsteps of the common people. Thus, NSS is actively engaged in the process of national development facilitating benefits of higher

education to the less advantaged citizens of the country. It is to be specifically noted that higher education is attainable only to 12.4 percent of Indian youth. In the above circumstances, NSS is discharging yeoman service to fill the wide gap of education. Thus, NSS can be considered as a gap filling mechanism of higher education intending the integrated development of the country. Therefore, the NSS is to be promoted by the Government and the public.

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