

BEST PRACTICE 2

The Title:

XavQWEST (Xaverian Quality Women Entrepreneurship and Skills Training)

Objectives:

XavQWEST is an enterprise to develop and fine tune the entrepreneurial skills of the students.

The goals of the practice are:

- To inculcate the spirit of self-dependence and to enhance the entrepreneur skills of the students
- To augment self sufficiency

The Context:

XavQWEST, a multidimensional venture unique to the College, has become synonymous with economic independence for women through its diverse entrepreneurial activities. Activities of different units encourage women to initiate, organize and run business enterprises of their own. Women in and around the institution are supported with various skill development initiatives to promote their entrepreneur skills and self-reliance. Activities that centre around XavQWEST are aimed at aiding women to perform all functions involved in establishing an enterprise.

The Practice:

Working with the prime focus on Entrepreneurial Skill development, XavQWEST enterprises to hone the innate skills in business and to help the beginners to be acquainted with appropriate tactics and strategies in their journey of entrepreneurship. The programme strikes at the very core of student ardour so as to encourage them to come up with novelty and vicissitude. The activities of XavQWEST in the year 2019-20 could be categorized into two:

1) SamrambhakaVedi

SamrambhakaVedi under XavQWEST aims to offer a direct physical platform for women entrepreneurs, amateurs and experts to bring their skills and ideas in action. Aiding

them to transform themselves as individuals who create a new business, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards, the practice is effectual and beneficial in terms of the availability of market. Samrambakavedi gives the opportunity to materialise their incubated ideas and to find financial gain for their efforts from the stalls and exhibits facilitated by the institution.

The College has a long tradition of promoting entrepreneurship among students, alumnae and women from different arenas of society through OSAX Fair (Old Students' Association of Xavier's). It gives visibility and recognition to alumni entrepreneurs as well as other female entrepreneurs, including that of the students. The sale which started twenty five years ago has now been transformed into a platform to showcase the products of women from far and wide.

- OSAX Utsav 19-20 which was organised this year had put variety of food items, ornaments and textiles on sale. The platform was beneficial to the students for chiselling their entrepreneurial skills and raising funds for their self-use. The Fair was open to alumnae, women in and around Aluva and the students to exhibit and sell their products.
- Apart from the Fair, OSAX is also regularly conducting classes in Calligraphy, tailoring, embroidery for women to promote self-sufficiency.

The college also promotes entrepreneurship through different Department Associations, Clubs and Cells.

- Entrepreneurship and Development Club of the college aims at endorsing the perennial skills of self-sufficiency through its varied events. A sell-sale platform was provided to the students this year under the auspices of ED club to showcase and market various handmade items like dishwash, scrubber, pickles, ornaments, cakes and chocolates. As per the training given by the club, Eco friendly paper pens were made and sold by students which offered a replacement for plastic pens. The initiative benefitted not only to raise funds but also to promote the idea of conservation of nature.
- College Students' Council is functioning in the college to revamp and renovate the student community towards the goal of self-dependence and integral development. Run by the students and for the students, the Students' Council makes use of every opportunity to refurbish the students with myriad prospects. To revitalise the entrepreneurial skills, the Council frequently puts up food and dessert stalls. This year

too, food and dessert stalls were put as their promotional events and used the fund gathered for hosting of activities of Students' Council.

- Mushroom cultivation initiated by the Botany Association was an entrepreneurial task that encouraged students to contribute towards the goal of conservation of natural resources. The students could raise fund from the sale of milky mushrooms which acted as a positive reinforcement for the labour that they put in.
- Economics Association hosted Entrepreneurship Exhibition-cum-Sale titled "Eco Mega Mela" in this academic year. The initiative was so effective in ameliorating their innate skills in entrepreneurship. Food items, Decors and textiles were put on sale which offered them a chance to amass their fund. The department also organised an Exhibition and sale of Khadi products for the promotion of Khadi in association with Sarvodaya Sangh.
- The inventiveness of the Chemistry Association was impactful in terms of entrepreneurship and Environmental Concerns. The students took initiative to make herbal soap using *Ocimum sanctum* (Tulsi), *Azadirachta indica* (Neem) and *Eclipta alba* (Bhringraj) extracts and Kera Coconut oil. The enterprise was done with the assistance of Kudumbasree trainers through which they made 25 SOAPS which were put on sale in the college. Under the auspices of Chemistry Association, Dishwashing liquid was also made for sale. The students also produced Hand Sanitizer (500 Bottles) with the help of their academic chemical acumen which were then distributed in and around Aluva with the hash tag "#Break the Chain." Eco friendly paper pen making initiative for students was also organised which helped instil eco-consciousness in the students.
- Institution Innovation Cell of the college focuses on revitalising the inherent ideas in the students and to give them sufficient scaffolding to establish their entrepreneurial skills. During the time of the Pandemic, the cell endeavoured to organise a session on designing innovative masks. The ingenuity with which the students made the masks was appreciative and a sale of the same was organised in which the students could raise funds.
- Energy and Environment conservation club hosted a session in collaboration with Energy Swaraj Foundation on assembling of solar study lamps. The students gained insights into the technicalities of assembling solar lamps which motivated them to make

their own productions. The student- assembled solar lamps were sold to the college staff and students.

2) Product Workshops and Skills Training

XavQWEST promotes hosting workshops and skills training to give hands-on training to create products, aiming to enable women to launch businesses of their own. Usually short intensive educational programs are given to the interested students who focus on attaining techniques and skills in the field of entrepreneurship. Adequate scaffolding is given to the students via the training ventures to define and redefine their set prospects. In 2019-2020, though the COVID 19 Pandemic had its ravage on its regular functioning, the institution could come up with varied programmes to make students adept in skills related to innovation and entrepreneurship.

- A Skill Development Centre is functioning in the college to promote life skills for career development among selected students through 180 hours of training by highly qualified Skill Development Executives. The students were given training in different sessions through the Skill Development Centre.
- Skill development training was organised for students on making eco-friendly paper bags and files were organised for the students. This not only helped them to be experts in paper-bag making business but also helped them to assimilate the green consciousness on reducing the use of plastics.
- The College organized industrial visits, business awareness classes and practical sessions on skill development training from which many students benefitted. The exposure helped not only to identify the new avenues in the area but also to hone the talents and skills of the students in entrepreneurship.
- “Interaction with Entrepreneurs” gave young women an insight into the prospects of self – employment. The interaction was motivating and persuasive for the students to pursue less trodden paths.
- The students endeavoured to make home decors using fish scales which was a venture under the aegis of Institution Innovation Cell. The craft from waste idea was highly innovative which won first prize for the state level Hackathon ED Club conclave “ENLIGHT 2020” organized by the Kerala State Industrial Department at Trivandrum.

- IIC celebrated National Innovation Day by conducting an awareness talk at the department of Zoology. It was conducted as an inhouse activity wherein the innovators in the department motivated other students sharing their experiences and stories of success.
- Under the initiative of Energy Conservation Club, the college became a partner institution in the Student Solar Ambassador program of Energy Swaraj Foundation. Under the tutelage of Energy Swaraj Foundation, 4 teachers were selected as trainers who in turn gave quality training to 100 students on assembling of Solar lamps
- Institution Innovation Council introduced an internal Hackathon to represent national level MHRD. The different teams who participated in the Hackathon came up with bright and innovative ideas, the best of which were selected to be presented at National Level.

Evidence of Success:

XavQWEST, as an initiative aided in diffusing the institution's stance on entrepreneurship among the students and the public. The affairs ventured in the practice were decisive in moulding a student community in line with the changing global employment scenario. The institution deemed it a responsibility to raise its students on par with the fast pacing entrepreneurial revolution. The practice proved effective and fruitful in making quality developments in the students capacitating them to excel at the State and National levels.

St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva has received a mark of recognition for its countless efforts towards innovation and entrepreneurship. As part of the Institution's Innovation Council's **Annual National Ranking** for higher performing institutions in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship, the **college received Five Star rating**. St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva is the **only Arts and Science college from Kerala** to receive the rank competing with 125 institutions. At All India Level, seven of the faculty and students of St. Xavier's College for Women are recognised as **Innovation Ambassadors**.

A team of students of the college has also won **first in the State Level Hackathon ED Conclave, Enlight 2020** organised by the Industry and Commerce

Ministry, Government of Kerala. It was the proof of expertise of our students in innovation and entrepreneurship.

The students of the college also won **Samrambhaka Mitra Awards 2 innovative initiatives** titled, **“Herbo Power”** and **“Rakshak- Borewell Rescue System.”** The awards are a proof of students’ inventiveness and adroitness.

It is also a matter of pride that the college received **an award from the Department of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Kerala** for the innovative project of the college titled, **“A Scaly Deal”** in the which the team of a faculty and students endeavoured to launch an alternative to the banned single use plastic.

Apart from the awards and appreciations, 25 percentage of our students launched their own business fields which echoes the impact of the practice, XavQWEST among students. They transformed the impetus that they gained from the college to initiate and flourish their entrepreneurship.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Being a Women’s College and an Arts and Science College, the institution encounters challenges and risks while implementing XavQWEST. Our students, being women, had to deal with:

- Challenges and constraints with regard to fund and time in accomplishing the desired goal
- Tied to the rigid semester system, students lack sufficient time to pursue the entrepreneurial endeavours they have mastered
- The funds needed are hard to be raised as the university grants and funds are minimal

To overcome the challenges and obstacles towards achieving the desired goal, the institution needs to identify more financial sources to meet the needs. The possibilities of Academic flexibility must also be speculated in terms of academic autonomy so that more time and energy could be invested in Entrepreneurship endeavours.