Practice I

1. Title of the Practice: Making the admissions process online.

2. Objectives of the Practice:

The traditional admissions process (hand submission of admission forms, processing forms manually for creation of merit-lists etc.) was followed by the college up until the last academic session. This made the whole admissions process very time taking and also involved substantial manpower from the faculty and the non-teaching staff. With the admissions process going online the whole process has become faster, transparent and much less laborious. Also the applicants are benefitted as they can (almost) complete the admission process (apart from the final verifications of the documents) from their own places.

The Context

Before this session, the college followed the traditional practices for the admissions process, where the applicants had to submit the (hand filled) admission forms in the college/departments along with copies of previous mark-sheets and other relevant documents. The forms were then manually dealt with for calculating the merit-index of each applicant (using previous mark-sheets and the various weightages as attached by the applicant with his/her application form). Then only could the merit lists be created and displayed. This involved considerable human effort on the part of the faculty and non-teaching staff. It also took a lot of time to perform these tasks.

The college administration felt that with the growing student strengths in the various courses/classes the admission process needs to be taken online. The NAAC Peer Team during its visit to the college (during accreditation inspection in October 2019) also suggested going online with the admissions process. Not only will it reduce the labor involved (in manually sorting forms, assigning various weightages, creating merit lists etc.) it will be beneficial to the applicants as well in terms of saving time and money.

During the last session we were able to float an online admissions portal for the college. At the beginning of this session the portal was used, for the first time, for the admissions process. The applicants to the various courses operational in the college can now register online (on out admissions portal) and fill the appropriate admissions form. They have to upload images/ PDF's of their academic and other (weightage etc.) documents with the online

application form. The software automatically creates merit-lists from the data filled up by the students (also taking into consideration the various reservation criterions etc.) which are then displayed online on the college website for the applicants. Only at the time of the final counselling do the students (whose are called in for the counselling) need to come to the college physically and get their original documents verified by the respective admissions committee. After this, the students granted admissions can deposit their fees online from their registered accounts on the admissions portal. This also makes keeping track of the fees data easier and transparent for the college administration.

The online admissions process imparts better creditability to the whole admissions process by enhancing its transparency. Also a database of the applicants is created (from the data filled in the online application forms) at the entry point and later a refined database of the students admitted in the college is generated very easily. Such a student database is in any case required, almost on a daily basis, by the college administration.

5. Evidence of Success

Going online with the admissions process has saved a lot of manpower and time (as compared to the previous offline method) during this session. Also the whole admissions process is much faster and smoother. Even the applicants save a lot of time, energy and money by avoiding repeated visits to the college during the admission process. Also the availability of a computerized database of the admitted students automatically is another advantage of the online admissions process.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

One problem encountered, mainly during the initial use of the online portal, was the lack of computer knowledge (basically backend handling) by some of the non-teaching staff members (who until now had been handling their part of the admissions process manually). But within a few days almost everybody become comfortable with their roles in the admission process. A few applicants complained of the lack of good internet connectivity at their native places (usually located in the remotest hilly regions) and so they encountered difficulties in applying online for admissions.

Practice II

1. Title of the Practice: Creating smart classroom (with interactive board) in the college.

2. Objectives of the Practice:

In this day and age, the teaching-learning process in the classroom needs to be extended beyond the traditional blackboard and chalk method. Audio-visual content can greatly (and easily) enhance this experience for the students as well as the teacher. Teaching using modern technology, in a smart classroom using content from PPTs, PDFs, Internet etc. along with chalk/pen like writing features, expands the horizons of teaching and can create a better learning environment for the students. Such smart classrooms also aid in creation of quality online materials (video-lectures etc.).

The Context

The use of audio-visual content can greatly enhance the teaching-learning experience for all the participants. Several departments and faculty members of the college have been making use of Projectors for teaching via PPT in conjunction with the blackboard-chalk method. It has been felt by the college, for quite some time now, that the teaching-learning process in the college must make greater use of the available modern technologies/instruments. During this session the college, with financial support from the district administration, set up one smart classroom in the PG Block of the college. A large smart interactive board has been installed in this smart classroom. Faculty members can now teach using PPTs, PDFs or other resources (internet material, external video lectures etc.). The pen feature of the interactive board also offers the equivalent of the traditional blackboard-chalk feature for writing/appending something on screen. The recording feature of the board also enables one to record the contents on the screen (during the lecture/presentation) as a video. This helps in creating /distributing the content of the lecture to the students. With the Corona pandemic still looming large over our heads and the possibility of online teaching continuing for some time in the future the smart classroom gives the faculty members an easy way to generate high quality e-content for the students.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

There is a definite learning curve for teaching in the smart classroom environment (particularly in making use of the features of the interactive board). So it takes a while for the teacher, especially for the less tech-savvy ones, to make the best use of the power offered by the interactive board. But this is expected during the initial use of every new technology/instrument. As the smart classroom has limited seating capability (40-50 people) only the PG classes (which have smaller student strengths) can make use of this classroom at present. Also having just one smart classroom, at present, may cause time-conflict between different PG classes/faculty. The college is already in the process of setting up another smart classroom in the next few months to help with these issues.