

## ***Analytical Note on Data Collected from Punjab University***

### *Community Engagement with Higher Educational Institutions and Social Responsibility in Higher Education*

#### **Category I: Linking learning with community service**

*In this approach, students and teachers apply their knowledge and skills in a chosen community to improve the lives of people in that community. This can be achieved through 'adoption' of a specific village or slum, and then providing engagement opportunities to students from various disciplines and courses to apply their knowledge to address the challenges of that specific community*

From the data available from the survey in Punjab, it emerges that basically three departments are involved in performing the functions of service learning. A majority of them is performed by:

1. *Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension*  
It provides a whole array of courses and programs targeted at different groups and covering a variety of issues.
2. *Centre for Women's Studies*  
It primarily focuses on dissemination of gender specific knowledge and awareness.
3. *Centre for Social Work*  
It mostly engages students as volunteers, under internships and block placements programs, wherein, they get an opportunity to meet and interact with the communities, and also work with them.

Under this category of linking learning with the community, the interventions carried out can be categorized into those that target local communities, and those that specially aim at the student fraternity. Under these heads also, the interventions can be classified into courses and general educational programs. This can be enlisted as below:

#### **A. For the general community:**

1. Courses: The courses further fall into two distinct classes:
  - i) *Courses on building skill sets/capacities for commercial enterprises.* For example, the courses designed on Cosmetology, Carpentry, Plumbing, Block Printing and Dying.
  - ii) *Courses to enhance the overall knowledge levels of the target communities.* For example, course on computer applications, english speaking, and coaching given to school dropout children for national open school examination.
2. Educational Programs: They primarily include the general activities by way of seminars, trainings, workshops, campaigns, panel discussions etc. They can again be classified in a manner as stated above.

- (i) *Programs on building skill sets/capacities of the community.* For example, workshop on communication and personality development, training on yoga and meditation.
- (ii) *Programs for enhancing the overall knowledge level of the communities.* For example, workshop on health and nutrition for children, campaign on healthy living for women, panel discussion on menopause and remedies/adolescent health and personal hygiene, workshop on female foeticide/reproductive health and rights, safe drinking water, stress management and alternate sources of energy, training programmes on gender sensitization and prevention of sexual harassment at workplace.

**B. For the student fraternity:**

1. *Courses on building skill sets/capacities of the students.* For example, soft skill development course
2. *Programs to enhance the overall knowledge levels of the students.* For example, National symposium on girl child, seminar on career guidance and counseling, seminar on population education, workshop on gender sensitization, awareness program on human rights, program on environment protection and social responsibilities

***Comments:***

- Since this category revolves around service learning, wherein students specifically go into the community and work with them in order to learn from the process. Therefore, along with the field/block placements and internships already mentioned, *the students who go out into the field as part of the NCC/NSS initiative (Q. 18 & 19) might also be included in this category.* Accordingly, mention must be made of the activities they undertake and how it contributed to their learning and knowledge.
- Under Q.20, it is mentioned that the students take part in projects during their internships. Here, *it needs to be made clear whether successful completion of such projects, entitled them to any academic credits.*
- This category also focuses on the ‘partnership’ between the institution and the higher educational institutions. *This relationship is not brought out clearly from what information is available from the survey.* We need to research and report this bit of information to bring out the true essence of engagement.
- From the interventions that are being done, it mostly appears to be a one way discourse, flowing from the universities to the communities. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to include all these in *Category III: Knowledge Sharing with the Community.*
- Also, *adoption of village “Khuda Lahora”*, where various developmental interventions have been carried out with the help of Punjab University can be included here. (It is mentioned in the later part of the survey, under question number 20. Herein again,

*mention must be made of how the students have applied their knowledge in the field and the learning s that they derived out of it.*

NOTE: The courses/programs for students are only 7 in number out of the total of 29 interventions. The rest target the local/general communities. However, in addition to the 7 programs, the students avail of the facility of field, visits, internships and block placements. Through such initiatives, they get a chance to interact with the community and work with them.

### **Category II: Researching with the community**

*In this approach, various faculties and programmes of higher educational institutions devise joint research projects in partnerships with the communities. In this approach, the community's own knowledge is integrated into the design and conduct of the research. New research by students and their teachers gets conducted and students complete their thesis/dissertation and research papers to complete their academic requirements (which can later be published), and at the same time the community's knowledge is systematised and integrated in this research*

Herein, again the interventions or the 'action projects', initiated, targeted both the community and the students, with two such projects with the former and one with the latter.

#### **A. For the community:**

Here, the projects aimed at identifying the underlying problems and initiating efforts to solve them. This took place by involving the local youth in addressing their problems and providing them with a solution. For example, the action project on women education and health, by *Centre for social studies* and that on drugs amongst men and youth by the *Department of lifelong learning & education*.

#### **B. For the students:**

A project on risk taking behavior of adolescents was initiated to identify the risks undertaken by them such as rash driving, tobacco/drug/alcohol consumption etc., and accordingly, appropriate counseling was given to the needy students. This is undertaken by the *Department of lifelong learning and extension*.

#### **Comments:**

- Although the interventions listed herein are termed as being "action projects", again the engagement from the side of the community is missing. *The integration of their indigenous knowledge into research is absent*, which thence defeats the motive of the engagement.
- From the nature of description provided in the survey form, what seems to be evident is that the university has designed its research projects in exclusion with the community's knowledge. *These projects are therefore being carried out in a uni-directional manner*,

where tapping of the indigenous knowledge is not adhered to. Although it is mentioned under Q. 17 that the action project on women, health and education incorporates community participation, this needs to be clearly brought out.

- Additionally, these research projects do not seem to be playing a role in fulfilling the academic requirements of the students, and are undertaken only in addition to normal course schedules. This is even mentioned on the comments section in the survey that no academic acknowledgement/credit is given for such community work, to either the students or the teachers who are involved.

### **Category III: Knowledge Sharing with the Community**

*The knowledge available with students and teachers in various disciplines is made available to the local community to realize its developmental aspirations, secure its entitlements and claim its rights from various public and private agencies. These can take the forms of enumerations, surveys, camps, trainings, learning manuals/films, maps, study reports, public hearings, policy briefs, and engagement with urban homeless shelters, teaching and health services in poor communities, legal aid clinics for under-trails etc.*

The data listed under this category in the data from the Punjab survey basically targets the youth (general local community), with one intervention particularly for the students, and one targeted at the NGOs working in the field.

#### **A. For the community**

Regarding the nature of the interventions, they are primarily of two types:

- (i) *Building skill sets/capacities of the community.* For example, workshops on computers, sewing and tailoring, indian embroidery, tie and dye, block printing, etc. This is primarily undertaken by the *Department of lifelong learning and extension.*
- (ii) *Enhancing the overall knowledge levels of the community.* For example, Awareness programmes on a various arrays of issues, such as legal literacy, human rights training, development issues, gender budgets, capacity building, etc. This is mostly undertaken by the *Centre for Social Work.*

#### **B. For the students**

A workshop on building basic computer skills, was conducted for the students of Khuda Lahora, the village adopted by the Punjab University, by the Department of lifelong learning and extension.

#### **C. For the NGOs**

Herein, the centre for social work was engaged in collecting newspapers and waste items which were collected and handed over to the NGOs, which used them for educating the children.

**Comments:**

- This category primarily aims at those interventions wherein the knowledge possessed by the teachers and students is disbursed to the community, to enable to lead better lives. So herein, in addition to those already listed, *all the courses and the educational programs slated in Category I can be moved in here.* All of them as described in the survey aim at building the capacities and knowledge level of the communities, which thereby facilitates their overall development process.
- Therefore, *all the seminars, workshops, panel discussions can be moved into this category.*
- All the courses mentioned under Q.15 in the survey, can be brought under this category, since they are also performing the function of knowledge sharing with the community. Therefore, courses on CAD, design enforcement, surface design, etc by the *Department of lifelong learning and extension*; Courses on women's studies conducted by the *Department cum Centre for women's studies and development*; and courses on health and development/community health/child youth and development can be moved into Category III.

**Category IV: Designing New Curriculum and Courses**

*In consultations with local communities, local students, local community-based organisations, HEIs design new curricula and courses that respond to specific needs of the community; such courses may be short-term workshops, certificates and degrees as well. They are meant for community members, as well as students already in formally enrolled HEIs.*

**Comments:**

- Interventions in this category seem to be missing in the community engagement initiatives taken up by the Punjab University, since there is no mention of courses which are designed in conjunction/consultation with the community.

**Category V: Including Practitioners as Teachers**

*Local community elders, women leaders, tribals and civil society practitioners have enormous practical knowledge of a wide variety of issues—from agriculture and forestry to child-rearing, micro-planning and project management. This expertise can be tapped by inviting such practitioners inside the institution to co-teach courses both in the classrooms and in the field.*

**Comments:**

- From the information available, it emerges that the *University does engage local practitioners to teach the students from their experiences/experiments in the field.* These are again done department/centre wise, as mentioned in Q.16.
- Here, mention may be made of the courses taught in the classroom, and those in the field, including the *degree of engagement of the local practitioners with the students and the benefits derived by both of them.*

**Category VI: Social Innovation by students**

*In consultation with student unions, associations and clubs, student initiated learning projects which have a social impact can be supported. Such social innovation projects by students can also have meaningful links to curriculum and courses.*

**Comments:**

- In Q.17, again the mention is made of the *same action research project on women, education and health, which is also listed in Category II, under researching with the community.* Therefore, the details of this intervention need to be brought out clearly and accordingly its categorization should be done.
- Similarly, for the various research projects mentioned under the same Q.17, *the essence needs to be brought out, with respect to both, students initiated learning project, their social impact, along with the link to their curriculum.*