Best Practice – 1

Title of the Practice: Fostering Gender Equity

Objectives of the Practice: Gender equity is an essential aspect of any educational institution's mission, and Lalit Narayan Mithila University Darbhanga has been committed to promoting inclusivity since its inception. The objective of the university's gender equity practices is to create an inclusive and diverse learning environment that values and respects all students and faculty, irrespective of their gender identity or expression. The university aims to provide equal opportunities and encourage the active participation of female students in all aspects of campus life, including academics, cultural events, sports, and extracurricular activities. The university's gender equity practices also focus on ensuring the safety and security of female students and faculty, providing them with counselling and support services, and creating awareness about women's empowerment and gender justice.

Context: India's patriarchal society has long perpetuated gender-based discrimination and bias, which has affected women's participation in all spheres of life, including education. Despite recent improvements in girls' enrolment in higher education, UNESCO still reports that it is lower than boys' enrolment. Women face significant challenges such as sexual harassment, unequal treatment, and social stigmatisation when they enter the workforce or pursue higher education. In response to these issues, Lalit Narayan Mithila University Darbhanga has implemented several practices that promote gender equity and inclusivity.

Practice: Lalit Narayan Mithila University has undertaken numerous initiatives and programs to foster gender equity on campus. These practices aim to ensure that female students and faculties feel safe and supported while pursuing their higher education and career goals. The university's non-discrimination policy, which ensures fair and equal treatment for all students during teaching and learning activities, is a significant step in this direction.

The University has encouraged female students to participate in extracurricular activities, including cultural events, sports, NSS, and debates, to ensure equal participation. The University has observed National Girl Child Day and International Women's Day by holding workshops, debates, group discussions, and talks assigned to specific departments for their observance and commemoration.

The Department of Home Science conducts several awareness programs related to women's empowerment and gender equity in the first week of March every year. These programs include seminars on women's empowerment, and human rights, and skill development programs like cooking, crafting, painting, sewing, and waste management.

Several University departments hold seminars and conferences on career challenges, women entrepreneurship, and gender justice throughout the year to promote gender equity and sensitisation. These programs aim to provide a platform for women to discuss the challenges they face in the professional world and create awareness about gender discrimination.

Safety and Security: The safety and security of female students and faculty is a top priority for Lalit Narayan Mithila University. The university has taken several initiatives, including posting at least one female teacher in every department, instilling confidence in female students, and encouraging them to pursue their aspirations without fear. The university has also posted female guards in important university buildings and ensured that the campus is under constant CCTV camera surveillance. This has

created an environment where female students feel secure while studying, working in labs, using the central library, and participating in extracurricular activities.

Apart from them,Lalit Narayan Mithila University offers comprehensive support to students, including personal, academic, and career counselling through the Mentor-Mentee Program. Mentors meet with students regularly to assess their overall performance and address any personal issues, referring them to professional counselling as needed. The University Department of Psychology operates a Counselling Cell for the students and staff of the university, providing support for educational and emotional issues. The university also has an Internal Complaint Committee working under the gender sensitisation action plan. This committee handles accusations related to harassment and others.

Evidence of Success: The tireless dedication of Lalit Narayan Mithila University to promoting gender equity has produced remarkable outcomes. Female students have reached remarkable heights of academic excellence and have demonstrated their prowess in a range of extracurricular pursuits. The University's non-discrimination policy, combined with its diverse range of awareness programs and support structures, has created a welcoming and safe environment for women to pursue their higher education and career aspirations.

The University has made remarkable progress in increasing female students' participation in higher education and hence, female students have not only achieved academic success but have also excelled in various extracurricular activities.

Moreover, the University's policies and programs have created a safe and supportive environment for women, promoting their overall well-being while pursuing their education and career goals. Through its non-discrimination policy, awareness programs, and support systems, the University has effectively addressed issues like sexual harassment, unequal treatment, and social stigmatisation. As a result, women feel empowered to pursue their dreams and succeed in their chosen fields. These achievements are a testament to the university's steadfast commitment to promoting gender equality and inclusivity in all aspects of campus life.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Despite its best efforts, Lalit Narayan Mithila University has faced some challenges in fostering gender equity on campus. One of the major challenges is the lack of resources required to implement some of the initiatives fully. The University needs additional resources to expand its counselling and mentoring programs and to provide more comprehensive support to female students.

Best Practice - 2

Title of the Practice: Green Campus Initiative: Tree Plantation, Ecosystem Preservation, and Fostering Sustainability

Objectives of the Practice: The Green Campus Initiative at Lalit Narayan Mithila University is a visionary endeavor with a noble objective - to cultivate a sustainable environment for teaching, learning, and research. With a fervent dedication towards preserving the natural resources, planting trees, and fostering a culture of environmental sustainability, this initiative strives to promote a healthy ecosystem for generations to come. This practice stands on the pillars of conservation, innovation, and community engagement, which together form the core of its principles. By integrating these values into the fabric of the university, the Green Campus Initiative envisions to inspire and empower students, faculty, and staff to become responsible stewards of our planet.

The Context: Lalit Narayan Mithila University is situated in a semi-urban area, grappling with numerous environmental challenges that demanded immediate attention in devising and implementing the Green Campus Initiative. Challenges like rampant deforestation, mounting air pollution, and inadequate waste management posed a serious threat to the ecosystem. However, undeterred by these challenges, the initiative was launched with a resolute aim to promote sustainable practices, reduce carbon footprint, and foster a culture of environmental stewardship. Through active participation and collaboration of the students, faculty, and staff, the initiative has established a green campus, which stands as a shining example of sustainability and innovation.

The Practice: The Green Campus Initiative at Lalit Narayan Mithila University involves a range of activities aimed at promoting environmental sustainability. The initiative includes tree plantation, waste management, energy conservation, and community engagement. To motivate the university to maintain and increase the green cover area of the campus in the coming years, the initiative places a special emphasis on the use of native species of flora that are suitable for the wetland ecosystem in which the campus is located. The initiative also includes periodic investigations into the spread of invasive species that tamper with the ecological balance of the university campus, and measures are taken to control their spread.

In addition to promoting a green campus, the university is also committed to promoting green energy. To reduce energy consumption and explore renewable energy sources, the university has established strategic partnerships with student and teaching communities, local governments, private companies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These partnerships aim to develop and promote sustainable practices and to identify and address sustainability challenges in the energy sector.

The initiative also includes a policy of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle of the waste generated in the university. The university is implementing sound long-term waste management strategies to reduce overall waste production and increase the recycled component of the waste stream. Lalit Narayan Mithila University has implemented a comprehensive waste management system that includes the placement of three different colored dustbins throughout the campus. The Blue colored dustbin is designated for the disposal of dry garbage and degradable waste, while the Green dustbin is designated for the disposal of recyclable waste, and the Red dustbin is designated for general household waste. These dustbins are emptied twice daily, at 06 am and 06 pm, to ensure the cleanliness and upkeep of the campus.

In addition to this, the university has established a vermin-composting facility that can convert organic waste into manure, which is then used to nurture plants and trees inside the campus. This practice not

only helps in managing waste but also promotes a sustainable environment. Any waste that cannot be converted to manure is collected by the Darbhanga Municipal Corporation on a regular basis.

Furthermore, the university has an added advantage of having several ponds and water bodies that aid in the natural recycling of liquid waste from the campus. Greywater is efficiently managed through a proper drainage system, contributing to the overall sustainability of the university campus. This approach to waste management and water conservation sets a great example for other educational institutions to follow.

To pave the way toward implementing the use of eco-friendly technologies for utilizing natural resources efficiently, the university has modified its Sale and Purchase policy. The policy now promotes products and services that cause the least harm to the environment, including alternative eco-friendly products made locally. The purchase policy also reflects fair trade commitments, with repair and reuse given priority before going in for new products. By adopting such policies, Lalit Narayan Mithila University is building its identity around a sustainable ecosystem and promoting a culture of environmental sustainability in Indian higher education.

Evidence of Success: The Green Campus Initiative at Lalit Narayan Mithila University has been a model for sustainable practices in Indian higher education. The initiative has made significant strides in improving the ecological health of the campus and the surrounding community. Through its efforts to plant over 5000 trees on campus, reduce energy consumption by 20%, and implement sound waste management strategies, the initiative has successfully achieved its targets and benchmarks. Moreover, the initiative's impact extends beyond the campus boundaries. The recognition received from the local community and environmental organizations speaks volumes about the initiative's contribution to creating a sustainable environment. The initiative has fostered a culture of environmental sustainability and encouraged community engagement. It has served as an inspiration for other institutions to emulate, paving the way for a greener future.

The results of the initiative demonstrate that small steps can lead to significant changes in the environment and the community. The initiative's success serves as a reminder that every individual and institution can make a positive impact on the planet by taking sustainable actions. The Green Campus Initiative has shown that it is possible to integrate academic and operational aspects of the university to promote environmental sustainability and create a green campus for future generations.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: The Green Campus Initiative at Lalit Narayan Mithila University faced a range of challenges during its implementation. One of the primary challenges was the lack of resources, including financial resources, technical expertise, and human resources. Limited funding posed a significant challenge, particularly in the initial stages of the initiative.

The success of the Green Campus Initiative also relied on community support. The university engaged with the local community to create partnerships and collaborations that helped to promote environmental sustainability. This collaboration enabled the university to access local knowledge and resources, which proved essential in the implementation of the initiative.

In summary, the success of the Green Campus Initiative at Lalit Narayan Mithila University depended on addressing several challenges, including limited resources, lack of awareness, and community support. The proactive steps taken by the university, such as fundraising campaigns and community engagement, helped to overcome these challenges and achieve the initiative's goals.