

Common Core Curriculum for Rural Engagement

National Council of Rural Institutes

Department of Higher Education

Ministry of Human Resource Development

Government of India

Common Core Curriculum for Rural Engagement

Introduction

University education has been adopting several strategies for focusing on the development of the spirit of Community Service. There is no particular curriculum for inculcating this spirit among the students. Hence it is felt that it is the need of the hour that a Rural Community Engagement curriculum be developed which can be offered as a compulsory course to all the students. It has been discussed that in order to bridge the gap between the expectations and actual practices, there is a need to integrate the two important aspects viz., Living and Learning.

There is an impending need for the engagement of the enthusiastic young generation in course of their education about their local community issues, challenges prevalent more so, in the rural community. There is a huge gap between the textual knowledge and evolving contextual practices, especially in rural India. Rural India which is prone to various natural disasters like the floods, landslides, droughts and cyclones has to build disaster resilience. Disaster resilience is the community's ability to anticipate, and wherever possible, prevent or minimize the potential damage on account of a disaster. It covers community coping capacity, to maintenance of certain basic functions and structures under all climatic conditions, and to recover and adapt to the changes that occur as a result. Community engagement tries to aid this requirement of the society. A draft curriculum has been developed as a part of group discussion held by group of faculty members from across universities in Telangana.

Characteristics

The following core characteristics form the basic frame work of the community based learning model which are prime factors that are considered while developing the curriculum.

Meaningful Content: in Community Engagement, learning occurs in relevant places where challenges are experienced. It focuses on issues that involve students through direct engagement with the communities for addressing and responding to these challenges.

Voice and Choice: In Community Engagement, learning tasks are active processes and they allow students to take an active role in the decision making process while performing these tasks.

Personal and Public Purpose: In Community Engagement process, the learning goals connect personal achievement to public purpose through community engagement.

Assessment and Feedback: In transacting Community Engagement Course, there is an administration of ongoing assessment supported by mentoring that gives students the opportunity to learn from their successes and failures. It also gives an insight into their prevailing standards and the understanding the gap between the current and expected standards.

Resources and Relationships: Community partnerships increase the community resources and community relationships which are utilized by students during learning and action, making it an interactive real time learning.

Curriculum Design

- Objectives
- Module Development
- Methodology
- Assessment
- Outcomes

Objectives

The following Objectives have been framed for the proposed curriculum.

1. To promote participative preparation of local Rural Resilience Index, Hazard Resilience Index and Hazard Risk Analysis using PRA techniques
2. To orient the students into handling susceptibility of rural communities to impending emergencies arising out of natural and manmade disasters, climate variability and motivating them into assuming eco responsibility
3. To orient students on Village Development Plans incorporating the aspects of the Village Disaster Management Plan
4. To provide practical opportunities for students for participation in rural community mobilization, service engagement and empowerment activities along with trained resident community volunteers
5. To promote preparation of strategies for building resilience and community responding system in nutrition including water, food safety and healthcare
6. To promote preparation and implementation of community resilience development plan for identified, mutually agreed and prioritized aspects for channelizing financial and physical support from Corporate Social Responsibility grants

Rationale

Community engagement can be a big game changer for rural communities. Though traditional extension and outreach programs are desperately trying to bring in the desired outcomes, are just not sufficient to heal the rift between higher education and public life. What is required is an approach that extends beyond service and outreach to actual ‘engagement’. By this, we mean that there is a need to move from a model of ‘public service’ where universities do things for ‘passive & needy public’, to one of ‘public work that taps, engages and develops the civic agency, talents and capacities of everyone, inside and outside the academy’. Therefore, the requirement of today is an ‘engaged model of university outreach’ which is far more collaborative than the customary conventional approach. Hence, higher education which is generally organized into highly specialized disciplines requires a paradigm shift towards a more systemic perspective, emphasizing collaboration, cooperation and partnership (UNESCO Chair, 2015). There is an urgent need to promote rural community-student engagement through the Rural Camp, Village Visit, Village Study, Inputs for instilling Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Adaptation and Eco Responsibility.

The various forms of community engagement are: (PRIA, 2014):

1. *Linking ‘formal’ learning and the local community*
2. *Researching with the community*
3. *Sharing knowledge with the community*
4. *Designing new curriculum and courses*
5. *Involving local practitioners as trainers*
6. *Social Innovation by students*

Proposed Model of Curriculum

The curriculum is for two consequent semesters. It is interdisciplinary in nature and more practice oriented.

S.N	Module Title	Module Content	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	Numb of Classes
I				
1.	Rural society	Dynamics of Rural Society : Social, Economic, political and cultural	Group discussion	4
2.	Change	Community Goal Setting: Inner Engineering	Group Exercise	4
3.	Participatory Learning, Social Mapping	Approaches and Methods, Community Project Proposal and Project Management, Concept and Steps, Thematic Maps	Field Visit Participation	12
4	Village Development and Disaster Management Plan	Village Development Plan including aspects and process of preparation of Village Disaster Management Plan	Case Study Interview, Participation, Field Visit	6
II	Resource Mapping	Natural and Human Resource Mapping and Management	Demonstration, Interview, Field Visit Mapping	6
6	Close to Community	Adoption of School/ Street/Health Centre	Case Study Field Visit, Survey	6
		Awareness : Health & Hygiene/ Rights / Policies & Programmes/ Corruption	Lecture, Preparation of Awareness Programme Aids coaching	6
7	Disaster Management	Disaster Preparedness- Risk Reduction Role and Responsibilities Rehabilitation: Physical and Psychological aspects	Lecture, Demonstration, Training	4
8.	Professional Intervention	Partnership with public , Private and non- governmental organizations	Field Visit, mentoring facilitation	6

Practicum details

Every Saturday or continuously for a week, students are engaged in the rural community to take up the following activities for developing field perspective on rural resource management, issue-based work and complex emergencies. The students are required to engage in an on-going DRR/response programmes in the respective locations.

1. Interactive Awareness programs with community experts and village leaders with PRA.
2. Interactive community exercise with community experts and village leaders on Village Development Planning.
3. Involving students in the literacy programmes of selected village.
4. Conducting training programmes with Self Help Groups and government officials for training in different vocations and developing skills.
5. Conducting information collection, collation and use(Data Management) workshops with the help of school resources of the selected villages and Self Help Groups.
6. Identifying the committees and establishing the committees with the help of village level officers.
7. Establishing village networks with the help of village level officers and district officials.
8. Conducting / facilitating health camps and campaigns.
9. Reporting the health concerns of the villagers, drainage system of the village and health habits of the villagers to the concerned authorities and facilitating address of these concerns.
10. Organizing orientation on preparing a system for community plantation management and community water management.
11. Creating awareness about the climatic change hazards in the villagers and inputs on how to address the same.
12. Organizing awareness programmes relating to water, soil fertility management, energy management.

Assessment

This is a two credit add on course, with one theory class and one practical class of two hours per week for one semester which is equal to 18 hours of theoretical input and 36 hours of practical input. Four credits for two semesters. It can be either offered as an elective of 2/5 credits in one semester. Focus will be on engaging in study and capacity building for promoting the rural community resilience to disaster risks and climate change and assumption of eco responsibility. The emphasis is more on the practical orientation of the student.

Outcomes

After completion of the course the student will be able to

- Understand the social, economic, political and cultural framework of the rural society
- Address the challenges with suitable responses for the identified rural issues
- Engage in the management of the rural community

Career Options

- Career in Community development
- Career with links in the Rural India including entrepreneurship and facility management
- Career as a rural nodal officer for Rural development Programmes