



“Solace”

**BEST PRACTICE**

at

**Women’s College, Tinsukia  
(2021 – 2022)**

# Best Practice – 1 [SOLACE]

## 1. Title of the Practice

“Solace” – an initiative to provide Special Relaxation in working Conditions for women employees during their Mensuration periods and free distribution of Sanitary Napkins to all students and staff.

## 2. Objectives of the Practice

The practice has been adopted as a part of the Gender Equity Policy of the college. It is well understood that women remain in a state of discomfort and despair (physiologically and emotionally) during their Mensuration periods and we believe that it is unfair to treat them on equal terms with men, during those days. As a gesture of goodwill and love towards our women employees, these special arrangements have been made by the college authority. We strongly believe that these relaxations do not incur any loss to the institution, either financially or otherwise. Instead, such gestures from the administration put them in a happy state of mind and in return they give more than 100% for the institution.

## 3. The Context

**Contextual features that have been taken into account:** The College, being a Women’s college, has the privilege of accommodating hundreds of girls every day in its campus. Moreover, there is a good number of female employees (teaching and non-teaching) in the college. Mensuration related issues are not only unpredictable, but also very disconcerting for them. We believe that the college authority, by the virtue of being the guardian of the college, should take upon itself the responsibility of providing solace to our family members at the time of their distress.

**Challenges:** Two minor challenges that we had to overcome were –

- 1) Minor financial burden of around Rs.2500/- in a year, which the college could afford easily.
- 2) It was necessary to sensitize all employees (male and female) and make them sympathetic towards issues related to women. It was also a challenge to make them understand the importance of Equity Initiatives.

## 4. The Practice

The practices that the college has been adopting since last couple of years can be depicted as follows –

- Free distribution of Sanitary Napkins to the students at the time of their needs has been a practice in the college since 2020. The facility has been extended to all female employees and teachers of the college.
- Notification regarding this was served to concerned parties. And also displayed in the college Notice Boards.
- Ms. Yashoda Chetry, a grade-IV employee of the college, has been entrusted with the responsibility of swift distribution of the same on demand.

## Best Practice – 1 [SOLACE]

- The Napkins have been purchased from wholesalers and kept in the Departmental Store of the college.
- A register has been maintained by the college office to keep record of free Napkins that have been distributed to the beneficiaries.
- Notification regarding relaxation of Working Hours was served to all concerned departments viz. office, Library, Hostel etc. and all staff are sensitized regarding this.
- There is a provision of Rest Room for Women Employees that they can avail at the time of their Mensuration period, when they are in utter discomfort due to cramps etc.

**Uniqueness:** This practice that is in place in the college is unique as it addresses the Gender Equity Policy of the Higher Education in the best possible way. It is unique because it reflects the institution's positive attitude towards the cause of women empowerment.

**Initial Constraints & Limitations:** Initially the students were found to be reluctant and shy to come forward and request for a free Napkin. But after years of relentless efforts and sensitization, the students and staff (female), these days come forward without any hesitation to avail the facilities.

### 5. Evidence of Success

Initially there was an air of hesitance/ reluctance on the part of the beneficiaries to come forward to avail the benefits. However with passage of time and as a result of consistent sensitization and counselling from the administration, the air of shyness has disappeared and both students and employees come forward and avail the facilities without any hesitance.

From our record kept in our office there is an average use of 360 pads per year. Taking into account that, average number of "academic working day" per year is 180, the average number of "Free Sanitary Napkin" in use is  $(360/180) = 2$ . This is a satisfactory count over a period of one year.

### 6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

**Problems encountered:** Little bit of problem faced at the beginning. It was due to orthodox mindset of both male and female members of the college family. Prospective female beneficiaries were reluctant to come forward due to shyness and other taboo in the society regarding Mensuration. Luckily for us this has been disappearing fast, thanks to continuous efforts of the institution in this regard.

**Resources Required:** Extra financial burden that has to be borne by the college was meagre and was covered well by extra resources generated by the college through various forms of house rents.

## Best Practice – 1 [SOLACE]

### **7. Notes (Optional)**

This Best Practice of our institution is in accordance with the Gender Equity Policy of the government. We believe this practice can be adopted by any institution (academic or, non-academic), which will create an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring, thereby inculcating happiness among the women counterparts. This enhances overall productivity of the institution.