7.2 Best Practices

Describe at least two institutional best practices as per NAAC format.

Best Practices No. 1

Best Practice No. 1: Sustainable Green College Campus Initiative

1. **Title: Sustainable Campus Initiative**
2. **Objectives:**
    - Create a sustainable Green College campus by planting more trees.
    - Promote energy conservation and generation.
    - Ensure the efficient use of water resources.
    - Implement proper waste management practices.
3. **Context:**

    Pollution is a growing concern due to rapid industrialisation, urbanization and deforestation. Parner, a drought-prone region with limited rainfall, faces unique challenges in water conservation. Recognizing these issues, the Higher Education Institution (HEI) aimed to utilize available resources efficiently. The initiative focuses on conserving energy and water, enhancing plantations, and promoting waste management to foster a clean and healthy atmosphere and environment. This sustainable environment supports effective teaching-learning processes and provides a conducive learning atmosphere. All stakeholders are involved in creating an eco-friendly, self-sustaining green college campus and promoting sustainability awareness.
4. **Practice:**

    HEI has developed a comprehensive strategy, collaborating with stakeholders, to implement various green initiatives, including:

    - **Plantation:** Over the last decade, the college has successfully planted and grown hundreds of plants and trees, including a special cactus garden with over 150 saplings and a botanical garden with medicinal plants. A "QR Coding of Plants" initiative makes plant information easily accessible, while bird feeders and wooden nesting boxes attract local birds and seed bank.
    - **Energy Conservation:** The college has installed 61 KW solar panels and solar water heaters to minimize energy consumption. The energy generated from solar power is fed into the grid. Energy-efficient lighting (CFL/LED) and power-efficient equipment are also encouraged across the campus. Awareness about energy conservation is promoted through signage boards, and public transport, battery-operated vehicles, and e-bikes are encouraged.

- **Water Conservation:** The college has implemented a rainwater harvesting system, plant drip irrigation system, and a wastewater recycling system using an STP (Sewage Treatment Plant.). Regular maintenance and cleaning of water tanks are ensured. A water purification system makes safe and clean (R.O.) drinking water available.
- **Waste Management:** The college utilizes a biogas plant to convert food waste into cooking gas. A certified external agency handles E-waste to ensure proper recycling. Litter burning is prohibited, and waste is composted or used as plant mulch. Wet waste and dry leaves undergo vermicomposting, enriching the soil and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The resulting organic manure is used to nurture campus greenery.
- **Quality Audits:** HEI conducts regular environmental, energy, and safety audits, as well as institutional energy audits, to monitor sustainability efforts.

5. Evidence of Success:

- A greener and more aesthetically pleasing campus.
- Reduced electricity expenditure.
- Increased percentage of energy sourced from renewable sources.
- Improved groundwater levels.
- Effective management of e-waste and solid waste.
- Enhanced learning environment.
- Our stakeholders, including students, staff, and external auditors, have provided positive feedback, which is a testament to the success of our Sustainable Campus Initiative. Their support and involvement are crucial to our continued progress.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

- Seasonal water shortages can affect water conservation efforts.
- Implementing a complete ban on plastic remains challenging.

Best Practices No. 2

Best Practice No. 2: Agricultural and Agri-allied Farming Consultancy

1. **Title: Agricultural and Agri-allied Farming Consultancy**
2. **Objectives**:
    - Provide expert consultancy to farmers in both agricultural and Agri-allied sectors.
    - Offer tailored solutions to improve farming practices, boost productivity, and enhance profitability.
    - Promote sustainable farming techniques and resource management in both sectors.
    - Bridge the knowledge gap between traditional farming practices and modern agricultural techniques.
3. **Context**:

    The agricultural sector, while facing numerous challenges, also holds immense potential for growth and improvement. Challenges such as outdated farming techniques, low productivity, and the need for better resource management can be overcome. Similarly, Agri-allied farming sectors (e.g., agroforestry, horticulture, and aquaculture) face unique challenges, but these can be addressed with the right support. Recognizing these challenges, the institution has provided professional consultancy services to support farmers in agricultural and Agri-allied sectors. This initiative aims to improve productivity, introduce sustainable practices, and empower farmers with knowledge to adapt to changing environmental and market conditions. The agricultural industry is grappling with several interconnected challenges that impact its efficiency and growth potential, such as outdated farming practices, lack of access to modern technology, limited financial access, marketing skills, lack of training, policy barriers, climate change and environmental degradation. Its need of time to use new technology in agriculture to adapt with global scenario.
4. **Practice**:

    The institution has established a dedicated consultancy service that offers the following initiatives:

    - **Agricultural Consultancy**: Expert guidance on modern farming techniques, soil management, crop rotation, pest control, organic farming, irrigation practices and efficient water usage. Workshops, expert guidance talk, field visits and training sessions are conducted to introduce farmers to sustainable farming practices and technology in agriculture.
    - **Agri-allied Farming Consultancy**: Providing expertise in Agri-allied farming sectors such as agroforestry, fish farming, horticulture, and beekeeping. The consultancy introduces best practices, enhances productivity, and improves market linkages.

- **Resource Management and Sustainability**: The consultancy promotes resource-efficient farming practices, including water conservation, integrated pest management, and organic farming. The use of renewable energy in farming practices (e.g., solar-powered irrigation) is also encouraged.
- **Agricultural processing and preservation**: The consultancy assist the farmers in processing and preservation of raw agricultural products into products ready for consumption. There are facilities for financial grants and assistance for the same.
- **Market Access and Business Development**: The consultancy assists farmers in identifying profitable markets, creating value-added products, and enhancing supply chain efficiency. Farmers are guided on marketing strategies, packaging, and branding to improve their reach and income. Farmers are also acquainted with new trends through usage digital gadgets.
- **Training and Workshops**: Periodic training sessions, seminars, and field visits are organized to update farmers on the latest trends in farming, sustainable practices, and technology integration.
- **Awareness programme**: Students are advised to carry out projects, prepare pamphlets, booklets on newly introduced profitable farming and circulate among the stakeholders.

5. **Evidence of Success**:
    - Increased crop yield and improved quality of produce.
    - Higher profitability for farmers, especially in Agri-allied sectors like agroforestry and aquaculture.
    - A significant number of farmers have adopted sustainable farming techniques.
    - Development of market linkages and increased access to better markets.
    - Positive feedback from farmers regarding consultancy services.
    - Enhanced awareness among farmers on resource-efficient farming practices.
    - Increase in small scale Agri-allied processing units which provides employment.
6. **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**:
    - **Limited Awareness**: Some farmers may resist adopting new techniques or practices.
    - **Access to Finance**: Many farmers face financial constraints when implementing advanced farming techniques.
    - **Resource Limitations**: Insufficient technical resources, training materials, or infrastructure availability in remote areas.
    - **Partnerships and Support**: Building partnerships with government bodies, NGOs, and financial institutions to better support farmers.