



KALINGA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (KISS)
Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar - 751024
(Declared under Section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)

7.2.1 Best practices

Q: Describe two Best practices successfully implemented by the Institution as per the NAAC format provided in the Manual.

A:

Best Practice 1: Learning from and nurturing Tribal culture and languages/ Protection, promotion and preservation of Tribal languages and culture

The university has implemented several practices to protect, preserve, and promote tribal languages and cultures. Three among them merit particular mention. The first is the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) project as a strategy to mitigate the challenge of linguistic alienation in early childhood education. The second is the appointment of fourteen Professors of Practice as a strategy to mainstream the teaching and application of tribal knowledge systems and practices through formal academic channels. The third is to celebrate various tribal festivals and ceremonies inside the campus as a strategy to stimulate wider public interest and participation.

2. Objective of the Practice

Students are often alienated by institution imparting education in languages other than their mother tongue, which often leads to dropouts. The university staff devised the MTBMLE project to meet that challenge. The objective of appointing Professors of Practice was to enrich the teaching and research programmes with inputs from tribal knowledge practices, art forms, vocational skills, and practices and add a dimension of experiential learning to KISS-DU pedagogy. The celebration of various indigenous festivals at the university is inspired by a commitment to the protection and preservation of tribal wisdom traditions embodied in these observances.

The Context

Students of KISS school come from the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. Most of them are first-generation learners, particularly vulnerable to feeling abandoned if teaching is carried out in an unfamiliar language. It is necessary that they are taught in their mother tongue so that they understand and relate to what is being taught. This arrests drop-out and encourages students to express themselves, absorb learnings and connect with fellow students and teachers. The university faculty launched MTBMLE as a means through which the students process invaluable knowledge related to biodiversity, food and food systems, cultural diversity, and sustainable ways of living. Similarly, the rich and diverse resources available in tribal languages and culture, knowledge systems, and tribal lifeworld's embedded in tribal festivals are increasingly marginalized from mainstream knowledge production and circulation processes. Their protection and promotion are an invaluable resource for building a sustainable world.

The Practice

The project is conceptualized, administered, and revised at the university level and applied at the school level. Experts at the university coordinate with subject experts, researchers, and civil society members, holding brainstorming sessions and seminars, etc. Experimentation and implementation follow at the school level, and the feedback is processed at the language laboratory run by the university

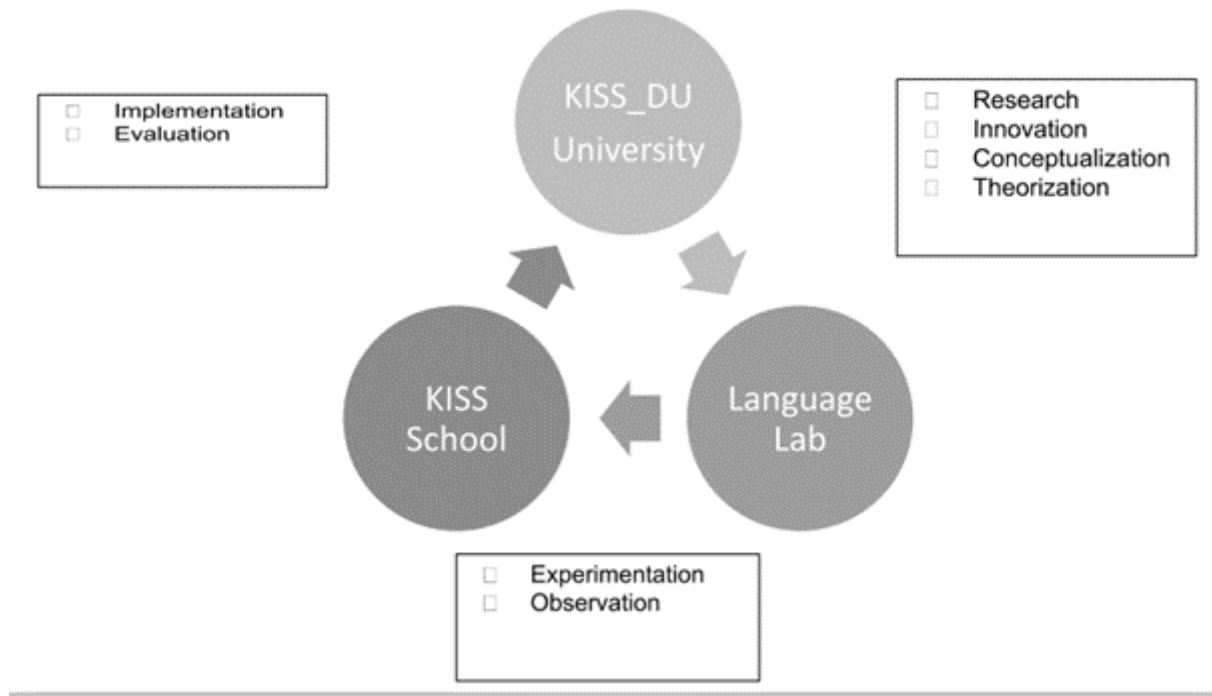


Figure 1: MTBMLE at KISS-DU: A Sustainable Model

faculty members. Students from the university gradually volunteered as indigenous language instructors replacing external professionals. The project has since become self-sustaining. The researchers as well as the instructors both now come from the university.

Mother tongue-based multilingual education at KISS follows an approach wherein language acquisition and language learning merge into a structured curriculum following the standard guidelines of the State board of education. The syllabus extracts ideas and concepts from the indigenous culture and gradually shifts to the state language mode of learning. While this process provides a sense of relatability and comfort in the students, the transition to the state and other languages prepares them for the mode of education being used for higher education. It is also an approach to bridge the gap between home and school language. KISS has adopted a five-dimensional approach. It includes:

1. learning through Mother Tongue
2. inclusion of cultural and local language/dialect
3. participation of parents and community
4. theme-based local curriculum
5. language transition

The strategies followed include capacity building of teachers, creating a profile of students and baseline survey Classroom transaction and monitoring, peer group interaction, student and teacher's evaluation, participation of parents and other concerned stakeholders and designing and developing, study material in local/indigenous languages.

Information dissemination is carried out through teacher training and workshops. Student profiles are created based on the mother language/dialect, and their social, cultural, political, economic, and geographical backgrounds and their interests and talents. Material for both teachers and students are developed in almost 10 indigenous languages/dialects. Creative and innovative measures are adopted to ensure teaching and learning become a joyful experience. Assessment tools are developed to ensure that the methods being used and methodology being followed. The knowledge and experience of parents and other stakeholders from the community is incorporated while designing the curriculum and related activities of the programme.

Evidence of Success

The achievements of the ongoing MTBMLE programme are a matter of pride for the university. Designed to address language gaps during early learning, it promoted the growth of indigenous languages and culture while developing the young children's cognitive, social, physical, and mental abilities, leading to easy assimilation into formal schooling. Children were provided education through an innovative pedagogic initiative, training modules, assessment tools to track students' activities, and teaching/learning materials in 10 Indigenous languages to bridge the language gap. The consequent promotion and regeneration of indigenous languages positively impacts the students' performance and attitude toward learning and helps sustain linguistic, social, and cultural diversities.

Programmes like MTBMLE provide a strong foundation in the first language, followed by the second and third languages, enabling the appropriate use of all languages for lifelong learning. It has helped the children to operate successfully in their native, state, and other languages.

The university also works closely with the state government to implement the programme using a similar pedagogical approach in its various schools.

The project won the UNESCO Literacy Award in 2022. The award, which recognizes the contributions to mother tongue-based literacy development.

Problems encountered, Resources Required

There have been challenges about how to harmonize the tribal knowledge practices with conventional academic knowledge production and delivery. The informal knowledge practices of indigenous intellectuals resist easy incorporation into the standardized knowledge management protocols of academia. Indigenous folk knowledge of therapeutics, ecology, faith healing, etc. at times needs to be tested within the framework of modern science. Another problem is the language barrier. The Professors of Practice often speak in their mother tongues, which, at times, non-tribals and tribal students not belonging to their tribes find difficult to understand. The problem of translatability remains a challenge. More research is needed on how best to harmonize the informal knowledge delivery practices of the tribal intellectuals with standard protocols of academic engagement and knowledge production. The university wishes to foreground such concerns in its research plans.

Conclusion

From our experience of transforming indigenous communities' lives through education, we learned that educational spaces require transforming and adopting innovations. When integrated with technological platforms, traditional knowledge, and wisdom deliver promising results. Learning spaces must promote the participation of children, who are primary stakeholders in decision-making, curriculum designing, pedagogy, etc. The teaching pedagogy and methodology must be designed to increase learners' participation and curiosity to undertake the task. Curriculums cannot be forced upon learners. The university shows the way to address this challenge. Language, the traditional way of receiving new knowledge, was challenging during its inception. The university entered a rigorous process of consultation with key stakeholders, carrying out documentation of the knowledge transfer process in indigenous communities supported by the indigenous people and mentored by the subject matter expert. Active participation of all stakeholders alone made the integration of an innovative outcome-based learning mechanism possible.

Best Practice 2: Harnessing the Sporting Potential of the Tribal Youth

KISS-DU is renowned for its illustrious sporting tradition. For example, the university has been at the forefront of Rugby in the country, and its students often form most of the national Rugby team. The students have distinguished themselves in swimming, archery, and several athletic disciplines. The vibrant sports facilities provided here have produced several sportspersons representing their country at national and international events such as the Asian Games and the Olympics. With an impressive

range of 24 different sports, KISS-DU, in partnership with its sister concern KIIT University, is one of the country's leading centres for student sports.

2. Objective of the Practice

From the beginning, the university nursed an ambition to produce Olympians. It started with a solid base of champion athletes among its early students since KISS school and college students had already excelled in national and international sports. Besides, the university resolved to harness the sporting potential of students to the highest extent possible. Therefore, sports is prioritised as it equips students with additional expertise and brings glory to the state and the nation.

The Context

The impoverished backgrounds of the students often force them to worry about starting to work and earning early. Such anxiety is a major distraction for academics and extracurricular activities. Therefore, the institution introduced a series of high-level sports training initiatives to encourage the students to dream big and aspire for national and international level accomplishments.

The university offers training facilities in 24 sporting disciplines. It has several international standard sports complexes with gyms, and synthetic volleyball, basketball, and tennis courts, besides indoor badminton, billiards, table tennis, yoga, and squash courts. The BCCI-approved cricket stadium, an FIH-approved Hockey stadium, an Olympic size swimming pool, chess hall, archery, and football stadium have all hosted major national and international tournaments. Then there's the velodrome, boxing ring, judo hall, kabaddi and kho-kho facilities and the health club, all of which conform to prevailing international standards.

The Practice

KISS-DU functions as a full-fledged sports training complex. It is as well-equipped as any national or international sports training school regarding human and physical infrastructure.

The university provides world-class sports medicine and rehabilitation facilities, free of charge, on account of free access for its students to its sister concern KIMS, a medical college and super speciality hospital.

In addition to professionally trained senior coaches, the university often hires the services of renowned national and international coaching professionals, who train the athletes for various national and international tournaments.

The university hosts national and international sporting tournaments, offering valuable exposure to student-athletes in sporting terms, management, and team building.

Accomplished national and international level athletes are regularly invited on campus to interact with student-athletes and share their experiences, encouraging and inspiring them as they prepare for a national and international sporting career.

The sports department has partnered with various public and private agencies dedicated to sporting excellence. For example, there is an agreement with the Sports Authority of India to allow some of its specialist coaches to train KISS-DU athletes. There is another collaboration with the High Performance Centre, Sports and Youth Services, Government of Odisha, where talented students are sent for special training. Third, the university has recently signed an agreement with FIFA, the international governing body for Football, under the prestigious Football for Social Change Scheme. Likewise, a collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency provides for Rugby coaches from Japan. A tie up with Glenmark Aquatic Foundation provides special training and exposure for high performing swimmers.

More importantly, successful athletes from KISS-DU serve as role models for their younger counterparts. The university often employs these successful students and alumni as trainers for younger athletes. Such employment offers some useful income to these young athletes in addition to developing their personality, management, and coaching skills.

The university has established a value system in which sporting accomplishments are rated as highly as academic success. Champion athletes are often as respected and recognized, if not more, as scholars.

The academic and administrative divisions do not penalize the athletes for missing classes. They are always helped with adequate leave and additional academic assistance.

Evidence of Success

In the 36th national games (Gujarat, 2022), 23 students and two coaches from KISS-DU represented Odisha. The university has eight out of twelve players on the women's Rugby team and five of twelve on the men's Rugby team. The Rugby women's team won the first gold medal for Odisha, and a woman weightlifter secured the first Bronze medal for the state.

Sixty-six students in Rugby, one in Archery, two in football, two in Kho Kho, one in Volleyball, one in Weightlifting, one in Judo, five in baseball, one in athletics and five in Chess have already represented the country in various international sporting events. Several students have represented the state in athletics, Archery, Badminton, Baseball, Basketball, Kickboxing, Chess, Cricket, Cycling, Football, Handball, Hockey, Judo, Kabaddi, kho-kho, Rugby, Sepak Takraw, Table Tennis, Yoga, Volleyball and Softball.

Archana Majhi is a national Kho Kho team member. Arjun Singh and Ajay Kumar Mandra were recruited by Orissa Juggernauts and Gujarat Giants, two of the teams in the Ultimate Kho Kho League 2022. Snehamayee Kishan was a member of the U-20 Indian volleyball team for 21st Asian Women's Volleyball Championship in July, 2022.

Problems encountered, Resources Required

The most common challenge was persuading parents that sports can be a career or future for their children. The more literate the parents, the less they believed sports could be a promising option. Second, the early years were hard. Before the students started winning medals, it was difficult to persist with rigorous training. Everyone wants results, but the early days of struggle and failure are often the best lessons. These early challenges were met only after various sporting bodies offered affiliations. Third, following success, the scale of ambition has increased, as has the need for state-of-the-art training facilities. Advanced sports training at the international level requires a great deal of funding. While that aspect is gradually resolved, there is always a need to provide the highest quality infrastructure, and training since international sports at the highest level are all about the quality of training and resource.

Conclusion

The university has indeed come a long way in terms of sporting excellence. Yet, there is a long way ahead. Given that the vision is to produce an Olympic medalist, there is always a requirement for the highest standard of infrastructure and training. The student-athletes require more regular exposure to the highest quality competition. The quality of available sporting facilities requires constant upgradation. More international exposure, in terms of coaching and tournaments, can sharpen the skills of our athletes.

Documents Attached

- [University Sports Page](#)