

# Exploration of mentorship Program of SDM College, Ujire in COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract** - Students being the major strength and future of the nation, handling them and orienting them towards proper direction is the major responsibility of all the educational institutes. Students without mentorship may become aimless and distracted. Mentoring is a great responsibility of a teacher which requires various skills. Students expect their teachers to be their inspiring instructors who mentor them at the appropriate time. Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College (Autonomous) Ujire located in Belthangady Taluk, DK District of Karnataka state concentrates on bringing innovations in mentorship. The teachers in the college are inclined towards effective mentorship. Various steps have been taken by the management to educate the mentors to carry out mentorship in an effective manner. Students express their satisfaction in the way of mentorship by their teachers. Mentorship helps in maintaining a healthy relationship of the teachers with their students and uplifting the confidence and hopes of the students. Mentors interact with their mentees frequently to understand their expectations and emotional status and they prepare a plan of action and act accordingly. Through the interactions, a platform is provided to the mentees to improve and excel. There is a healthy relationship between the mentors with the parents of their mentees where parents' teachers' interactions help the mentors to achieve the expectation. Currently, during the pandemic, mentors have managed themselves by interacting online with mentees. During the lockdown, mentors have taken care of the stranded students of other states and countries. Mentors are successful in maintaining the mental stability of the students who were away from their home and parents. Mentors have found that mentorship is getting effective as students are more comfortable to express themselves better through online mode rather than a normal approach. Mentorship shows some negative effects when students become over-reliant on the mentees. Mentors should be sensible enough to understand the age and maturity of the mentees and act accordingly. Mentees may be reluctant if they are treated as amateurs. Overall mentorship is a balanced and holistic approach for upholding confidence and healthy human resource to the society.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Relationships, interactions, and skills that students acquire during college years will profoundly influence their life and career outcomes (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Supportive relationships with mentors' -teachers, counselors, and other caring adults at college, to whom many students look up to as they grow their interests and career paths, have been described as a key component of college experience that is crucial to the growth and academic success of young adults. Students having more interaction with college faculty members have shown to display greater social integration stronger academic performance (Raposa et al., 2020).

Students are the true brawn of the country. Handling them takes a great deal of ability, including developing a good relationship with students, knowing their feelings, encouragement, support, etc. These skills may be collectively referred to as mentorship. A mentor is a person who contributes with his/her expertise, experience and perspectives; the basic concept is that the mentor provides advice to the mentor in his/her personal and professional growth. Mentoring the students in appropriate situations makes them determinant, focused, and confident. A psychological study says that students tend to isolate themselves from society and feel inferior which could be avoided by mentoring them.

Students' transition from higher secondary school environment to a typical college setup could be exciting, confusing and many a times distracting. Avoiding such attractions and making them focused on their aim can be achieved through mentoring, that plays a crucial role in their life. A mentor should be a guide, counselor, parent, companion who must handle a variety of individuals with different qualities, perception, and knowledge (Lucey and White, 2017).

Various studies say that students expect mentors to be their inspiring instructors with whom they are free to express their emotions and confusions regarding all the aspects. Students with mentors perform better compared to the ones without mentors. In the process of mentorship, both mentors and mentees are benefited. Students show higher satisfaction when they obtain a good mentor.

Mentorship is not supervision, although in both mentorship and supervision entail meetings between a competent and experienced person and a person with less competence and knowledge. Mentorship is constituted by reflecting, analyzing, discussion built on spontaneous interaction, no obligations, and trust. Whereas supervision is direct, compulsory during professional practical training and include evaluations (Lucey and White, 2017).

## II. INTENTION AND METHODS OF MENTORSHIP SDMCU

In Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College (Autonomous), Ujire (SDMCU), located in Belthangady Taluk, Dakshina Kannada district, mentorship implemented in structured and organized manner to meet all the demands of the students to uplift the quality of the students of various backgrounds. As the students are the real assets of the institute, the management's focal point is mentorship. Profuse steps are being taken to upgrade the process of mentorship to make the students have a positive approach towards their career and life. Students being responsive to the mentorship have shown greater progress in their careers. Students express their substantial satisfaction in the way of mentoring done by their mentors.

Mentors are constantly involved in an interaction with the students individually to understand their mentality and thought process. Parents of the students are also being communicated concentrating overall development of the students. To meet the expectations of the students with different attributes, mentors are being educated to make them proficient. A committee of mentors constantly works to upgrade and uphold the strength of mentorship in the college. Innovations in the mode of mentorship are being focused and efforts are made in bringing novel approach.

### **Educating the Mentor**

At the initial duration of every academic year, all the mentors are educated and enlightened by making them interact with an experienced faculty. In this interaction, the resource person will share his/her experience in mentorship and its outcomes. As this interaction is organized during the initial stage, it enhances the preparedness of the mentors to handle their mentees and they get introduced to new ways that can be included in their mentorship. The interaction also guides the mentors in preparing a plan of action and act accordingly. New faculties are sensitized to the mentorship program.

### **Frequent Interactions**

Mentors frequently interact with the mentees often. Mentees will be addressed individually and together in a group. In this frequent interaction, mentors understand the mentee's level of knowledge, skills, mentality, emotions, etc.

Mentees' areas of interest will be understood, and the mentor will act as a facilitator to enhance the skills in their field of interest. A platform is provided to the students to share their opinions and grievances. Grievances will be immediately addressed and rectified. Students with lesser confidence will be counseled and made to improve. Through frequent interactions, students are made to feel comfortable to express their views. Slow learners will be contacted regularly, and their progress is monitored by giving them various encouragements. Apart from the academics, mentees will be addressed on the issues related to their accommodations, health, emotions, etc. A small platform will be provided to the mentees where they express their talents so that they overcome inferiority.

### **Parents Teachers Interaction**

Students' progress in their academics is being informed to the parents by having an interaction with the parents. The intention behind the interaction will be making the mentee aware of his/her level of progress and any faults in the behavior or conduct are rectified. Any grievances of the mentee that is shared with the parent by the mentee are known through this interaction. Parents help the mentor in uplifting the quality of the mentee.

### **Post-Covid Mentorship**

During the interactions of the mentors with their mentees before covid pandemic mentors would observe and analyze the behavior and emotional status of the mentees through observing the student's body language, facial expressions, and way of interaction. But as there is no direct interaction with the mentees currently, mentors are contacting them virtually and making the mentees to express their emotions vocally and counsel them. This created a chance for mentors to educate the mentees about future perspectives and prospects which was not possible earlier due to time constraints. Currently, mentors can approach the mentees and communicate better with them compared to earlier days. The frequency of interaction has increased as there is enough scope to interact and communicate. In certain ways, mentees feel more comfortable expressing their concerns offline compared to direct interaction. This is helping the mentors to give a balanced and holistic approach.

During the lockdown students from other states and other countries were stranded in the hostels. After a while, they started to feel homesickness and even the parents were very much anxious about their well-being. Mentorship played a crucial role in uplifting their confidence and boost their morality by constantly being in touch with them. When students were mentally disturbed mentors made them to contact counselors of our college from the Department of Psychology. This helped the mentees to maintain their mental stability and mentors consulted the physical educators and guardians/wardens to engage the students with some physical activities. Mentors encouraged their mentees to utilize online teaching aids in better ways and to be in touch with academics.

In the whole process of mentorship, students feel comfortable sharing their views and thoughts to the mentor which makes them feel confident. They obtain an instructor and a companion which makes them overcome social isolation and feeling inferior. Mentees will utilize the platform provided to excel in their field of interest. Mentorship helps the mentees to get enough resources from the mentor to show overall growth. It helps in keeping the individual focus on the students. Mentorship eases the teachers to address the grievances of the mentees. It increases the sense of belongingness to the institute among the students. Mentees' expectations can be met and increases psychological development such as social skills, confidence, time management, etc. It benefits in the following aspects

- His/her career planning
- Improving Social skills & communication skills
- Building up his/her confidence
- His/her overall psychological wellbeing
- Setting his/her academic goals
- Improving His/her time management skills
- Solving His/her academic problems
- Developing his/her sense of
- Belonging to the College

Students can progress and achieve better under the proper guidance of the mentor comparative to the students without mentorship.

With so many positive effects of mentorship, there may be some negative impact if the mentorship is not carried out in a proper and balanced way.

- Mentees can be completely dependent on their mentors if excess attention is given to the mentees. And even mentors should give equal importance to all their mentees to make the students feel comfortable.
- Mentees may feel irritating when the mentors interact with them continuously with noticeably short duration of time and they may feel that mentors are prying on them.
- Mentors should be sensible about the age and maturity of the mentees and treat them accordingly. If the mentees are treated in an amateur way they may feel uncomfortable and irritated.
- Mentorship could be ineffective if the mentors are over affectionate and very much lenient. A holistic and balanced approach is very much required for fruitful mentorship.

The COVID-19 has been critical time for the both Mentors and Mentees of the Institute. The Mentorship Program of the college has had very positive effect on the students of college, which is reflected in greater percentage of the student being enrolled in various university for higher education. The mentorship program during the Covid 19 pandemic have been an opportunity to explore the innovative methods for effective mentoring.

### Acknowledgments

The authors thank, Dr. B.A Kumara Hegde, HoD of Botany and Biotechnology; Dr. Satheeshchandra S, Principal, SDM College (Autonomous), Ujire and Dr Yashovarma B, Secretary, SDM Educational Society, Ujire, for their guidance and support.

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