

## Summary Report of 7.3.1

<b>7.3.1</b>  <b>Q<sub>i</sub>M</b>	<b><i>Portray the performance of the Institution in one area distinctive to its priority and thrust within 1000 words</i></b>  <b>Provide web link to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Appropriate webpage in the Institutional website</li><li>• Any other relevant information</li></ul>
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Response:

The vision of the university envisages providing education and research of global standards with commitment to student success and creation of thought leaders contributing to nation-building through a strong ethical, innovative and interdisciplinary approach with heightened social conscience.

### **KHOJ WINTER SCHOOL**

The element of social conscience imbibed in the very philosophical basis of the institution has been carried forward through several endeavours. Prominent among them is the KHOJ program, which has been one of the defining social immersion activities at Navrachana University. Conceived right at the inception of the University, the Khoj program is a vehicle to inculcate social awareness, empathy and inter-disciplinary skills amongst the students, with a larger aim of proposing solutions to societal problems through innovation. To further strengthen these foundational ideas of Khoj program and to engage on topics that are relevant and can be made visible to the society at large, program has been consolidated as a larger and more ambitious activity that is undertaken by students and faculty members during the semester break under umbrella of KHOJ WINTER SCHOOL.

### **INTER DISCIPLINARY/ MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH**

The aim is to administer the Khoj program as intense and rigorous field based activity in workshop mode while addressing a pressing social issue in the region in and around Vadodara. This format leads to an uninterrupted and concentrated involvement of the students and their mentors. Faculty members of Navrachana University have undertaken some very innovative and relevant projects that they wish to pursue with the students, under Khoj. These projects touch upon various contemporary issues of concern such as environment, ecology, waste management, urban labour, migration, traffic, farming practices, public spaces, social behaviour etc. to name a few. Students are free to choose Khoj project of their choice. Most Khoj projects demand either an inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary approach of working and hence students from different Schools sit together in the projects and try and understand issue and find solution through collaboration. In the process, the students learn to approach and address issues, leading to deeper insights into their understanding. The Khoj Winter School generally ends in a public exhibition of all the projects.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND COLLOBORATIONS**

To integrate the element of societal conscience in the student life cycle through extension & outreach, Khoj is offered as a course beyond the textbooks which requires a direct engagement

with society. Khoj is offered across all undergraduate programs as a compulsory course with three credits. Initially, the scope of this course was open and the students were at liberty to identify any social challenge. The open scope, however, led to difficulties in comprehending a social problem that could be addressed in the course of a semester. To overcome this challenge, the course is now offered in collaboration with an NGO. Students identify social problems from within the thrust areas of work of NGO.

### **EXTENSIVE FIELD WORK**

The Khoj course takes real-life issues and challenges facing society as its syllabus, thus truly becoming a course in which society becomes the textbook. It offers learning opportunities to connect with the community in question and address its issues. Students develop the ability to identify and understand complex, real-life problems challenging society around them and understand that such problems are not discipline-specific problems. Thus, students develop ability to comprehend social problems through field work and communication with stakeholders and then combine this understanding with knowledge from available literature and subject experts to find or at least develop a strategy to find solutions that address such problems.

Projects developed by students are at varying levels of direct usability and implementation. The shift from working on general social and community problems to the specific problem identified by the NGO has helped to develop specific strategies that can lead to social innovation. Some of these strategies are directly used by the stakeholders, while others are further developed. As an illustration, the KHOJ project on adult literacy for rural women developed learning resources, such as simple lessons in numeracy and literacy, operating ATMs, working with Android phones, and so on. It was given to the NGO to be used by them. Similarly, two separate projects produced livelihood options for rural women and people with disabilities. While one of the livelihood options, home-made snacks and parathas, was developed as a business model. There is an endeavour to help develop a marketing strategy for same.

### **DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLIC EXHIBITION**

Consolidation of projects that are directly used by the NGO is a great motivation for both students and faculty and is inspirational for subsequent batches. The outcomes of these projects benefit the community and expand the learning of students. Interaction with stakeholders from rural community sensitizes students to use of local language for communication and conducting themselves in culturally appropriate ways when on field visits.

A good chunk of these activities focus on ecology and environment in general and waste management in particular. Projects regarding wastage of food and ways of overcoming it have been also attempted. Some of the issues concerning the city of Vadodara have been taken up for studies. Apart from these, several social issues have been also taken up.

More than 160 panels and models related to about 30 projects have been developed by over 600 students and teachers under this initiative.

Apart from Khoj, a course on social internship is also offered as a part of curriculum, requiring students to engage with foundations and NGOs working to address social challenges. Nature of this internship is deliberately kept distinct from an industry or corporate internship to enable

the students to learn from society. In addition to these, social immersion activities & student participation in community-based co-curricular activities provide exposure to society and its diversity. Khoj offers learning opportunities to connect with community and address its issues. Most of the programs have internships as a curricular component to provide exposure to field realities.

There is a sharp focus on innovation and start-up ecosystem as well. Various co-curricular activities help to provide opportunities to develop an understanding and connection with society.

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### 7.3.1 Supporting Documents

Sr. No.	Particular	Link to view
1	<i>Institution in one area distinctive to its priority and thrust:</i> <b>Additional Information</b>	<a href="#">View Documents</a>