

1. Title of the Practices: Institutional Social Responsibility

2. Objective of the Practices: As a part of its Institutional Social Responsibility the University has taken an initiative of starting psychological counseling and guidance center on the campus and RT-PCR testing center during the pandemic with following objectives:

1. To be helpful to the citizens in general and students in particular, to building psychological resilience, self-esteem, relieving them from stress, help re-establish the goals and improve mental strength.

2. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recognized RT-PCR testing center was established during the second wave of Covid-19 as a testing facility for the larger society and students in particular, to detect presence of virus with the help of the Government of Gujarat. Also to help the civic bodies the Bioscience department has been collecting the sewage samples to find out the Viral load in the fecal matters.

3. The Context: The life style and competition in life has created a lot of stress in the people worldwide. Students face such stresses and gets confused and experience helplessness. Rising cases of depression and suicide among students and citizens had motivated the University authorities to start a Psychological Counselling Centre with a dedicated helpline number. Many a times counselling by experts can relieves people from the stress and regain self-confidence. During the second wave of pandemic Covid-19, for diagnosis for the presence of virus, the RT-PCR testing facilities in Surat city was highly stressed and insufficient. The University offered services of its trained manpower and facilities for establishing ICMR recognized RT-PCR Centre. The teachers and technical staff obtained specialized training and the University purchased equipment for the Centre. The viral load in the fecal matter can help predict the spread of Covid-19 virus in the community.

4. The Practice: The services of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Center can be availed by students on the campus as well as citizens at free of cost. The counselling can be face to face, either alone, with family or in coordination with the police control room. From April 2020 the counselling was conducted telephonically for which a dedicated help-line number was made public. After signing MoU with Police Helpline, persons attempting suicide and hospitalized were

visited by the counsellors at the hospital. Once at the Center the counsellor performs common tests to identify the root cause of the problem and provide necessary advice and follow ups.

Following chart details types of counselling services provided by the Center.

Chart 1 -. Counselling services availed: by category

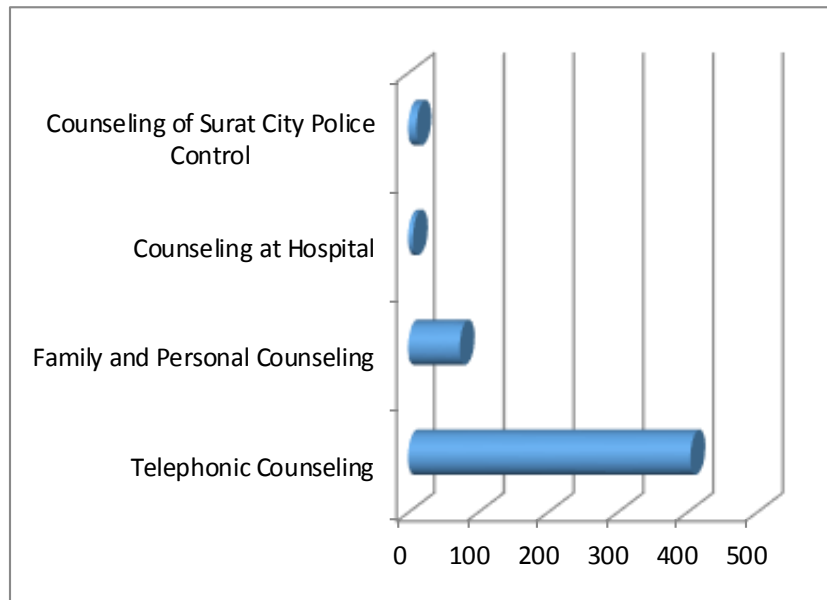


Chart-2 Psychological Issues in Citizens

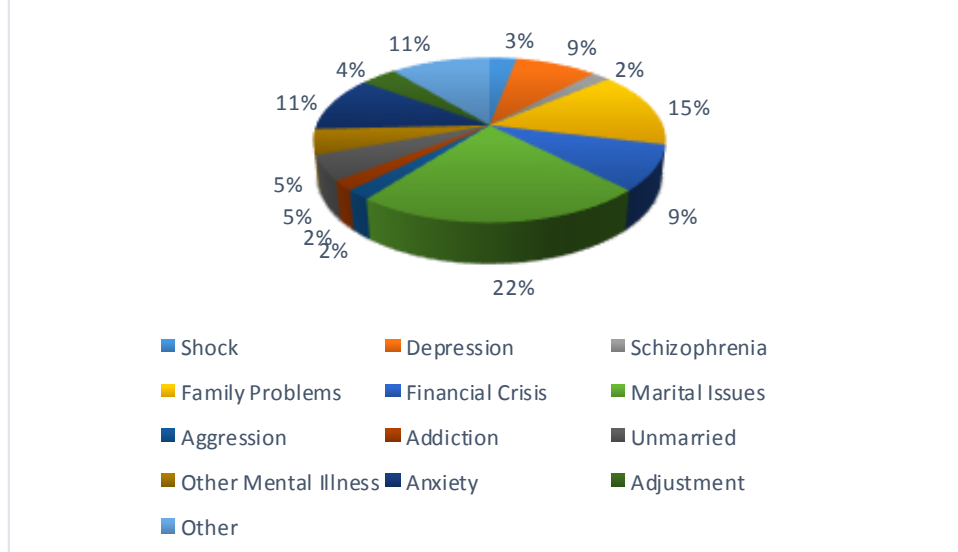
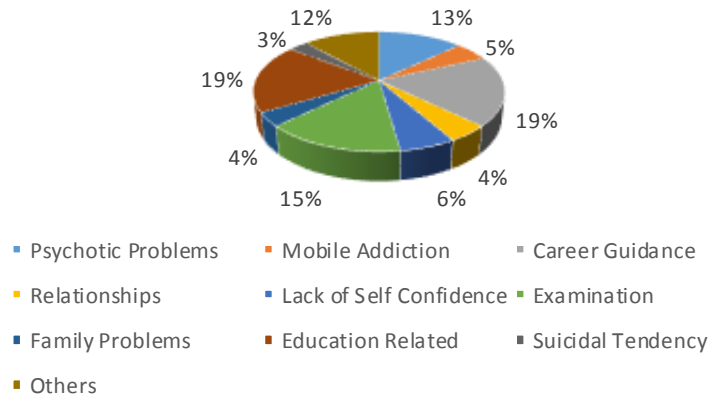


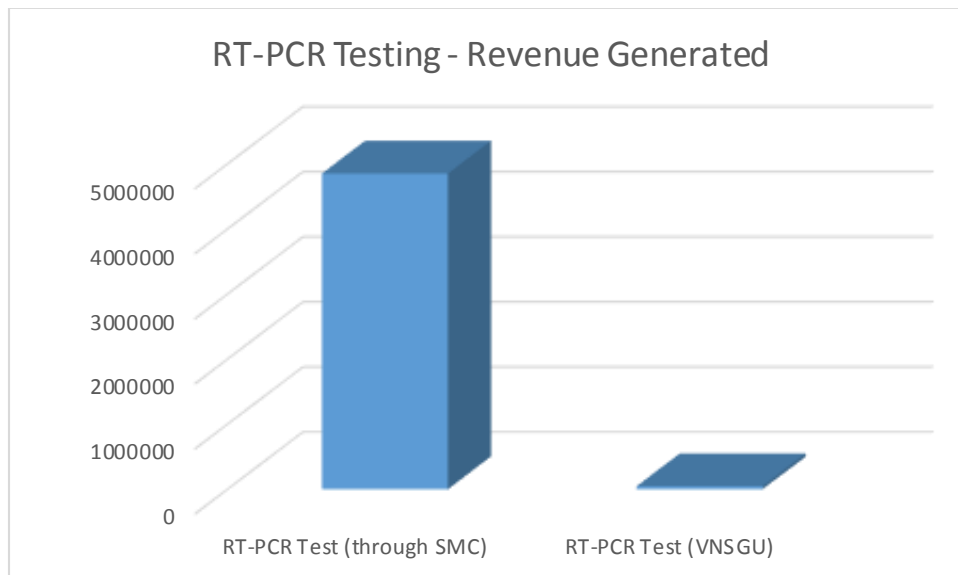
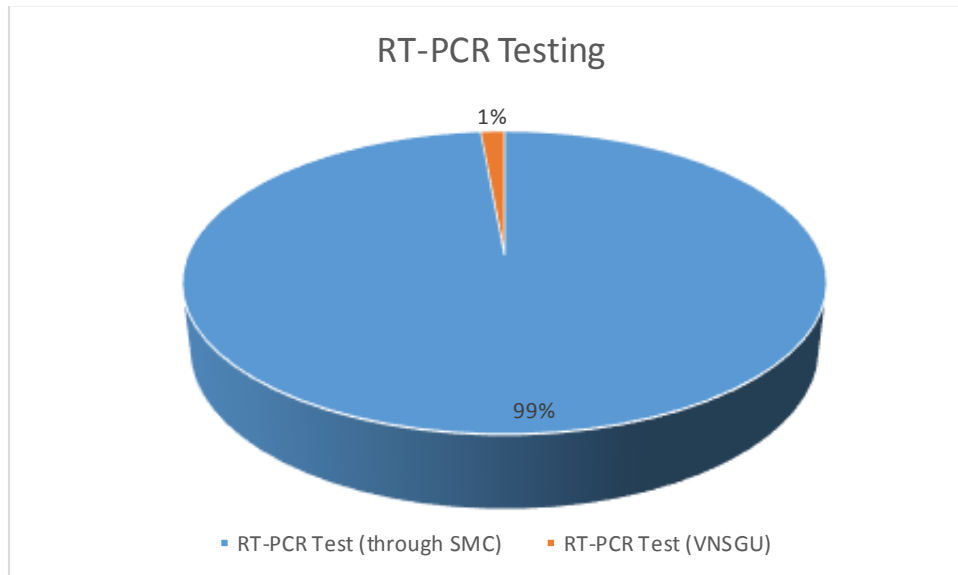
Chart- 3 Psychological Issues in Students



In addition to this during the reporting period, 59 programs having participation of more than 8000 persons, have been conducted by the center, for students and citizens, on various topic related to mental well-being in various institutions and the Post-Graduate department of the University. The broad topics of these programs include General Psychological Aspects, Academics and Career, Mental Health Problems and its management among others. After the lockdown and second wave of Covid-19 there was a steep rise in number of suicides due to rising unemployment and premature death of relatives. Every day the police helpline used to get around five to ten calls of suicides, making it a serious menace on hand. Considering the gravity of the problem Commissioner of Police personally visited the Center and a MoU was signed between Surat City Police and Veer Narmad South Gujarat University to curb the menace. According to this MoU if any person attempts suicide and if rescued is brought to the counseling centers.

About RT-PCR: A well-defined policy was prepared and is in place for extending the services of RT-PCR testing facility. Accordingly the facility in place, is made available to all the citizens including students and staff of the University on the payment of a prescribed nominal fee. The trained staff collects sample and conducts test and provides certificate as per the guidelines issued by the ICMR. To help the citizens MoU between SMC and the University, for testing the samples collected by the SMC at a prescribed rate for staff, students of the university and the citizens was arrived. A subsidized rate for the students and staff was prescribed.

The Bioscience department has been collecting Sewage samples from Surat Municipal Corporation and Vadodara Municipal Corporation since May 2021 on monthly basis and the reports are submitted to both the Municipal Corporations.



5. Evidence of success: In last 5 years, counseling services from the center has been availed by 951 clients which included 445 students, 482 citizens and 24 persons through police helpline. Center was able to save lives of 24 civilians and 14 students who tried to attempt suicide. Of the 482 civilians, 405 were counselled telephonically during the pandemic through a dedicated helpline **1800 266 2345**. This apart, the center also keeps regular track of all those who have attempted suicide and availed counseling services. The counselling pertained to financial crises

and the social stigma faced by the citizens. Above and all the university center also initiated counselling of the **diamond workers** on account of the step rise in the suicide cases among them. The following table provides the breakup of the problems faced. Till now the RT-PCR testing center has analysed more than 77350 samples for the presence of Covid-19 virus. Additionally the Bioscience Department has tested 434 and 76 samples from Surat and Vadodara Municipal Corporation respectively for the presence of Covid-19 viral load.

6. Problems encountered and resources required: Counselors' face several problems, difficulties and challenges. These are unawareness about counselling in people, issues of job security among workers, absence of a professional body to regulate the network of supervision and consultation, underfunding of mental health services among many. The centers find that the significant gap between the burden of mental disorder and the dedicated resources needs urgently addressed. The RT-PCR center at Bioscience department is solely dependent on the fees collected for testing the samples for the presence of Covid-19 virus. The financial constrains at this center hinders its smooth functioning.

7. Notes: In addition to this the University has organized vaccination camps to support the Civic Body at its clinic. Students, staff and citizens took benefit of these camps.