Best Practice #1:

1. Title of the Practice: Green initiatives

2. **Objectives of the Practice**: Addressing environmental degradation as a cause of climate change which is a global concern.

As citizens of the world community, it is imperative that each one of us acts responsibly towards the environment while working for its conservation. Being an educational institution to reckon with, Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University is aware of its duty to educate learners on the importance of conserving the environment and biodiversity by encouraging the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle. The University strongly believes in teaching through practice and therefore attempts to set an example for the learners by taking up many green initiatives on its premises.

3. **The Context**: The University is located in one of the busiest areas of the city, amidst residential and commercial establishments where air pollution is considerably high. The civic infrastructure of the area has not been modified adequately to deal with the increasing demands of the population. Poor sewerage system, pressure on water resources and electricity, and vehicular pollution are some issues plaguing the area. The University infrastructure was not equipped to deal with the changing lifestyle patterns and scarcity of resources as it was built in the early 90s when the scene in the capital was very different. Despite the limited resources to overhaul and maintain the environment, the University has taken steps to become an environmentally conscious space and regulate its demand for limited natural resources.

4. **The Practice**: Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University caters to a diverse population of the state as it intends to expand Higher Education by reaching the unreached through various flexible means suited to the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. A holistic education is necessary to create socially responsible individuals. Higher education cannot limit itself to merely providing academic training. Learners must be made aware of their duties and responsibilities towards society and the world. Being sensitive and responsive to the

environment is a trait that has to be inculcated in the learners. The University has initiated the following practices to set an example and inspire all stakeholders to opt for environment-friendly alternatives.

• **Solar panels**: The University has installed Roof Top Solar Plant Panels under the project RESCO model in June 2019, with a plant capacity of 100 KW and by linking it with the existing MPEB grid system. In this regard, the University has deposited an amount of Rs. 33.556 lakhs to MP Urja Vikas Nigam, which is the nodal agency for the same. The electricity bill was charged Rs. 3,50,000.00 per month before the installation of the solar panels, and after installation, the bill has been reduced to Rs. 2,16,000.00 per month. Therefore, the university is saving approximately Rs. 1,34,000.00 per month by generating and exporting 4775 units each month to the grid. Additionally, the university has also been saving Rs. 16,08,000.00 per year since June 2019, and has saved approximately Rs. 60,00,000.00 till date.

• **1.5^{o} Climate Clock:** The university has installed a 1.5^{o} climate clock in the administrative building of the campus. The clock indicates how much time is remaining until the global temperature increases by 1.5^{o} Celsius due to global warming. The Paris Agreement of 2015 has set a global framework to avoid the dangerous effects of climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2^{o}C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5^{o}C.

• **Rainwater harvesting**: The University has a well-laid-out plan to create infrastructure and augment existing systems to facilitate rainwater harvesting on a large scale. The green grounds around the University building allow the rainwater to percolate through the soil to replenish the deep-water aquifer/underground water reserve.

•**Vermicomposting:** The infrastructure for vermicomposting on a small scale has been successfully installed on campus. The compost thus manufactured has promoted organic gardening practices, and the campus inmates use it for kitchen gardening purposes, thereby reducing their dependency on chemical fertilizers. Producing green manure has also simplified the challenge of solid waste management. The dried leaves, stumps, and green wastes from the inmates' kitchens are recycled and utilized in vermicomposting.

• **Saving paper:** The University is consciously working towards reducing the use of paper by digitalizing documents and introducing an e-academic management system that involves digital management of students' academic details, including marks, attendance, etc. The

University also encourages duplex printing and photocopying and recycles paper. Old answer sheets and packaging materials of the SLMs are recycled and reused. Every department practices the use–reuse–recycle concept while working. Used printed letterheads are used for internal memos.

•**AROGYA VATIKA** (Herbal Garden): The University has shown its commitment to the environment by developing a herbal garden with various shrubs and medicinal trees. This initiative has added to the utility of our lush campus, which sprawls over 25.26 acres. Our verdant lands are covered in hues of green, and the area brims with a rich biodiversity that includes some rare species of flora and fauna. Apart from the above, the University also creates awareness of the medicinal properties of plants and trees.

Nakshatra Garden—The University has successfully developed a Nakshatra Vatika of 27 Nakshatra, incorporating environmental consciousness, traditional knowledge, and spirituality.

•**E-waste management**: Repairing and recycling of laptops, computer hardware, and projectors are encouraged and executed regularly. Some departments use overhauled computer peripherals and laptops as a part of this process. There is also a disposal box for E-waste collection at the University.

5**. Evidence of Success**: Each initiative undertaken by the University is a small step to contribute to the greater good of humankind. As it may be understood, these initiatives take time to bring about significant changes. However, the efforts are bearing fruit, and gradual changes are becoming visible. MPBOU has signed an MoU with Energy Swaraj Foundation, and two of our regional canters of Bhopal and Satna have received the climate clock award in recognition of our efforts to combat climate change recently.

We have actively participated in the Climate Correction Day (CCD) Challenge for mission LIFE launched by ESF under the Lifestyle for Environment program launched by the Honourable Prime Minister of India. All faculty and staff of MPBOU observed a no-iron clothes day and took a pledge of conservation.

The University has also entered into MoUs with VALMI and EPCCO for resource-sharing and research purposes.

• There has been a sharp decline in non-green electricity consumption after the installation of solar panels.

• The tanks for rainwater harvesting are currently under construction, and it is hoped that the rainwater harvesting project will be successfully implemented as soon as planned.

• As targeted, vermicomposting has been successfully implemented

• The e-academic management system and duplex printing have visibly reduced paper use in the University.

6**. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:**

The University, being an open and distance learning institute, does not have the regular footfall of the students, so their direct involvement is not possible. Financial constraints remain the biggest problem for expensive green initiatives like rainwater harvesting and maintenance of rare herbal and medicinal plants. The University is attempting to raise funds for these initiatives through several channels. Educating the local community about green initiatives so that they adopt adequate measures also remains a challenge, given that there are many commercial establishments and densely populated colonies in the locality.