

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (A Study of the United Nations' SDG 16 with Respect to College Campuses across Pune City)

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Abstract: SDG 16 was established in 2015, with the goal of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. It addresses problems related to conflict, exploitation, lack of access to justice, ineffective institutions, exclusion, lack of representation, limited access to information and lack of legal identity. Its mission is to provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The progress on this is regressing with estimates of all forms of violence to increase by 10- 46 per cent by 2030. Youth are the protagonists for Peace, Progress and Development. Colleges are training grounds where their thoughts are shaped and translated into action. This paper aims to examine, at the micro level, the challenges faced by students and the initiatives taken by college authorities on campuses across Pune City. There has been a disturbing increase in college violence, ragging incidents, and mental illnesses. There are regulatory bodies, creative platforms and counselling assistance on campus. The issues of violence, exclusion, representation, and limited access to information are pertinent to the current study. This paper aims to investigate the effectiveness of these bodies and their impact on College Students.

Keywords: SDG-16, Peace, Justice, Strong Institutions

1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal 16- PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS- It was framed by the United Nations in 2015. It is officially worded as "Promote Peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDG 16 has outcome Targets-

- Reduce violence
- Protect children from abuse & exploitation, trafficking & violence
- Promote the rule of Law and ensure equal access to justice
- Combat organised crime & illicit financial arms flows
- Substantially reduce corruption and bribery
- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions
- Ensure responsive, inclusive and representative decision making
- Strengthen the participation in global governance
- Provide universal legal identity
- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

SDG 16 Implementation Targets-

- Strengthen national institutions to prevent violence and combat crime and terrorism.
- Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is concerned with SDG 16. The UNDP works on conflict prevention by empowering youth, especially women.

The paper's layout is as follows: Literature Review, Research Problem, Objectives of the study, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions and Suggestions.

2. Literature Review

By training future leaders in governance and human-rights thinking, generating research and policy engagement around justice and institutions, and modelling organisational practices- governance, inclusion, and transparency- on campus that mirror SDG 16 targets, higher education plays a unique role in achieving SDG 16. Therefore, universities can serve as both living laboratories for institutions that are peaceful and accountable as well as knowledge creators.

Effective integration of SDG 16 necessitates both governance policies and curriculum, as well as student participation initiatives. Though implementation varies by region and institution but the ultimate aim is to make the institution peaceful, just and strong.

Research Problem:

The present study aims to study the extent to which the college regulatory bodies support the framework and structure created by the United Nations' SDG 16 by acting as mediators at the micro level.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the motivations of students to go to college.
- To study the constructive & creative activities that colleges in Pune provide.
- To examine if students are getting opportunities to participate in them.
- To find out if students feel safe on the college campus.

- To explore reasons for their opinion on safety on campus.
- To understand students' awareness of grievance machinery on campus.
- To examine if health facilities are available on the campus.
- To understand if students have access to important information from college authorities.
- To find out if colleges across Pune are aligned with SDG 16 of the United Nations.

3. Methodology

The present paper attempts to understand whether the values mentioned in SDG 16 are implemented in colleges across Pune. The sample chosen is of respondents who are students of different colleges in Pune city. The methodology comprises the analysis of secondary and primary data. Secondary data was analysed to understand the mandates set up by UGC for higher education institutions. Based on these mandates, a questionnaire for respondents was designed, yielding qualitative and quantitative data.

The Sample Size includes data from 115 respondents. Simple mathematical tools were employed for data analysis. Findings are based on Primary Data, and concluding observations have been recorded.

Information from Secondary data:

Regulatory Bodies of Colleges

- SGRC- Students' Grievance Redressal Cells- The University Grant Commission (UGC) has made it mandatory for every institution of higher education to have SGRC for student complaints related to academic, administrative or infrastructural issues. The cell ensures quick acknowledgement, fair hearing and timely grievance resolution.
- ICC POSH Act- The Internal Complaints Committee is a mandated body established under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) POSH Act, 2013, in India. It is responsible for preventing and redressing complaints of sexual harassment against women employees and students. Its role is to implement anti sexual harassment policies, address inquiries and complaints impartially and foster a safe student environment.
- Anti-ragging Policy- it is mandated by the UGC to curb the menace of ragging in Indian colleges. Under its framework, ragging amounts to a criminal offence, the consequence of which can be severe punishment, expulsion from college or even imprisonment. The policy makes it mandatory for students to sign an undertaking honouring the institution's support for anti-ragging. The institute is required to display the rules and helplines of authorities to approach in case of a ragging incident. The institute is responsible for organising events and awareness programs to sensitise students on anti-ragging and the consequences of ragging on campus- a squad to monitor and prevent ragging to be formed in the college.
- Women Empowerment Cell- it is a committee that furthers the economic and intellectual advancement of students. Towards this end, guest lectures, workshops, awareness programs and skill development programs are organised.

- Counsellors on campus- The mandate requires all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to appoint qualified Counsellors and create Student Services Centres to provide comprehensive mental support for students. The goal is to ensure that every student has access to psychological support during their academic journey.
- Yoga and meditation- UGC encourages yoga and meditation in HEIs for students' holistic well-being. The guidelines aim to nurture a deeper understanding of the interrelation between body, mind and spirit.
- Medical facilities on campus- It is mandated that all HEIs provide adequate health care facilities for students, faculty, and staff on campus. There must be at least one ambulance for emergencies. In Maharashtra, educational institutions are mandated to create sick rooms, with first aid supplies, conduct annual medical check-ups and have on-call doctors. First aid kits must be available in all college departments.
- Right to Information (RTI)- The RTI Act has made it a legal obligation for colleges to be transparent and accountable to the students' needs for information in different phases of their educational journey.

Creative Platforms on College Campus

- Nature Club- Many colleges across Pune have a Nature Club to promote student-nature interaction. Sapling plantation, maintenance of flora and fauna, and keeping the campus green and clean have evoked great responses from students. Students become aware of their surroundings, and these drives help them to release their stress.
- ED Cell- A start-up revolution is happening in India. To support this, many institutions have started Entrepreneurship Development cells to foster budding entrepreneurs and boost their creativity and innovation.
- NSS- National Service Commission, is a central government voluntary scheme for the holistic development of students through community service. Student volunteers organise blood donation camps, environment initiatives, and work with schools in rural areas.
- NCC- National Cadet Corps is the largest uniformed youth organisation in the world. Many colleges have this unit to train students for the army, navy and air force. The students are not only trained to get into these services but also focus on environmental and social betterment activities. Many cadets are selected to attend camps and the R-Day parade in New Delhi every year.
- Cultural Department- Many colleges have a dedicated cultural department to train upcoming artists in dance, drama, music, etc. These groups foster students to participate in inter-collegiate events and really add sparkle to the college.
- Inter-collegiate Events- Many popular events in Pune city, like Troika and Astitva, reflect students' collaborative and creative initiatives. These flamboyant extravaganzas bring out the best in students and help them appreciate and celebrate cultural diversity.
- Commemorating important events and people, colleges organise Kargil Vijay Diwas, Atmanirbhar, Savitribai, Jyotibha Phule, Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Independence Day, Republic Day, and Teachers' Day

celebrations to arouse the patriotic fervour and to respect and cherish the lives of noble people.

4. Findings

Major Attractions of College Campus

- 56.5 per cent of students are drawn to college by academics.
- 53 per cent of students are attracted by friends in college.
- 47 per cent are fascinated by college events and activities.
- 36.5 per cent of students are drawn because of the teachers.
- The remaining areas are the infrastructure and the campus's natural environment.

Popular Events supported by the College

- The most popular creative events and platforms are cultural fests, tech festivals, Ed cells, sports activities, and Business talent hunt
- The colleges support community engagement activities conducted by NSS & NCC, like Blood Donation, Village adoption, environmental consciousness drives, etc.

Opportunities for Students

- 85.2 per cent feel they are getting ample opportunities to participate in college activities and events.
- 11.3 per cent feel they sometimes get opportunities.
- 3.5 per cent feel they do not get opportunities to participate.

Reasons for non-participation in college activities

- Students focusing more on academics usually do not participate in events. Very few have expressed that they are in a shell because of their introverted nature. Managing time is yet another concern. Staying far away from college is another problem when participating in events.
- Out of the 3.6 per cent who do not get opportunities to participate, have expressed the unfairness in the voting system and the first-come, first-served reasons for not being involved in the college events.

College Safety & Security

Pune College campuses are safe. 98.3 per cent of the respondents feel secure on the college campus. The reasons for this feeling of security, as evident from responses, are a congenial environment created by friends and teachers, CCTVs installed in college premises and the presence of security guards make the campus secure. The anti-ragging policy prominently displayed on college boards makes the students cautious. The biodiversity and the cleanliness of the college ensure hygiene safety.

Conflict on Campus

- During events, some minor incidents of squabbles are reported. No major conflicts have been reported.
- There has been verbal abuse on campus.

Grievance Machinery on Campus

- 58.3 per cent of the students said that the grievance machinery came to their rescue in a crisis.
- However, there was no awareness about the grievance machinery handling the crisis. Students appreciated the efforts of teachers, heads of departments, and peons to solve their issues.

- In the event of conflict, 63 per cent of students felt that the conflict was resolved amicably amongst the students. 30.4 per cent lacked awareness about approaching the authorities. 21.7 per cent hesitated to ask for help. Forty-six students responded to this question.

Health Issues on Campus

- 81.7 per cent of students have not faced any health issues or accidents on campus.
- College authorities were quick to take students to the hospital in an ambulance in an emergency.
- In case of minor health problems, the staff responded quickly.
- Very few colleges in Pune have well-equipped medical assistance on campus.
- A first aid box is available but not well stocked, and the medicines have expired.
- Unclean toilets have been a hygiene issue on many campuses.

Mental Wellness

- 51.3 per cent of the respondents are either not aware or oblivious of the presence of a psychologist/ counsellor on campus.
- 92.2 per cent of students are aware of Yoga/ meditation sessions held in colleges.

Right to Information

- Of the 115 respondents, 5.2 per cent of students are unsatisfied with the information circulated in college. 94.8 per cent of students are satisfied with the timely notices and circulars.
- On average, 90.45 per cent of students are very satisfied with examination-related information.

Feedback / Suggestions

- 48.7 per cent are either not aware or have no knowledge about suggestion boxes in college.
- 32.17 per cent of the total respondents feel that the college authorities respond to their suggestions.

College Environment

Average Rating out of 5, based on 115 responses, 5 being the highest rating

- Peace - 4.17
- Justice - 3.58
- Equity - 3.83
- Inclusive - 4.13

5. Concluding remarks and suggestions

The Pune college campuses pose a happy picture. There seems to be peace and tranquillity on the campus, making it a conducive environment for learners. Timely intervention by college authorities will ensure that minor quarrels do not become mighty conflicts. The internal complaints committee should promptly address problems so that they do not get beyond control. The anti-ragging messages flashed in college premises make the students cautious not to indulge in mischief or reckless behaviour. Some colleges have introduced friendship events for freshers to build camaraderie and belongingness in students.

The college culture determines how students dress and speak. A culture where there is respect for seniors, teachers, and staff helps to keep the Indian Ethos and value system intact. Value-based learning, Sessions on Personal Development can influence young minds. The events and activities help in fostering leaders and building bright and creative teams.

Doctor on campus and first aid seem to be a concern. This should be taken up immediately and seriously to attend to any major casualty or contingency arising on the campus. Clean washrooms are also a concern, which is a fundamental need and right of a student. Also, there is a need for office staff to be trained on soft skills.

The Pune college campuses score high on Peace and Equity, which needs to be applauded & sustained. A little more effort to align to SDG targets – Inclusivity and Justice will make Pune Colleges witness the celebration of diversity and make the Institutions Strong. Strengthening our academic institutions by providing a safe environment for learners, equal opportunities to all, and a progressive mindset will go a long way in establishing Peaceful and Harmonious Societies.

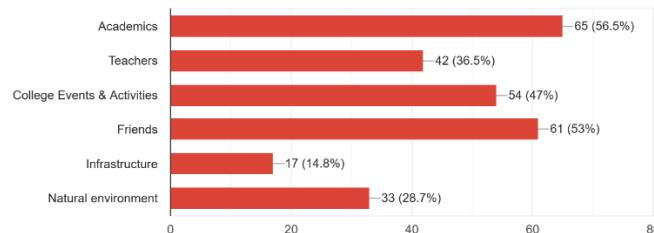
6. Future Scope

- The scope of this study can be extended to lesser-known colleges within and outside Pune city.

Annexure

What draws you to your college campus?

115 responses



II

Name some important important events/ creative platforms of your college?

115 responses

Troika
As it covers almost everything

Muktachanda, Fergusson College Fest.

Astitva, troika

Many co-curricular activities.
Different competitions (sports, speech etc..)
Chance to set up stalls.

Troika, Astitva, Cybersecurity , Anubhuti, Emerge

Sports Arena / Anubhuti (annual meet) / Astitva (cultural event)

- Linking SDG 16 to the Indian Preamble, which mandates accountable and inclusive institutions (Target 16.6). The study can be refined and extended to strengthen our existing grievance mechanisms, as mandated by the UGC, for college campuses in India.

References

- Ministry of Education, Government of India, *Study in India: Regulatory Bodies in Higher Education*, available at: <https://www.aicte.gov.in/>
- United Nations, *The 17 Goals*, available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Author Profile



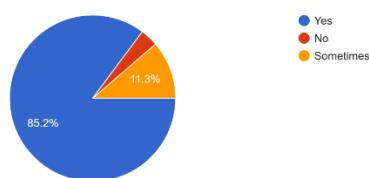
Mrs Seema Nair has been teaching at BMCC for the past 13 years. She is a faculty for Business Mathematics, Business Statistics, Operations Research and Research Methodology. She is currently pursuing a PhD from Symbiosis International University (deemed).



Dr Shilpi A. Lokre has been an Assistant Professor at BMCC for over 19 years. She teaches Marketing subjects, including Product Management, Strategic Brand Management, Marketing Communication, and Retail Management. Corporate communication and Personal development are her areas of interest. She believes in experiential and creative learning methods for students.

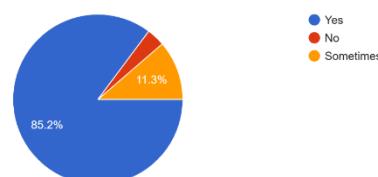
Do you get opportunities to participate?

115 responses



Do you get opportunities to participate?

115 responses



If No, why haven't you participated? State reasons.

32 responses

Because I focus More in study's

Some events I didn't participate in, because I am selective about things, events, etc

Cause Time management, as I stay far away from college it's not possible for me to always available in all events, traffic , some undeveloped road and bridge in middle , current reason heavy rain

Not interested

Knowledge

did not participate in Asttiva as i didn't have enough time to give for the event

Do you feel safe on campus?

115 responses



If yes, Why?

108 responses

There's nothing to not feel safe and if anything happens I have my friends and if not them then the faculty is there

The campus crowd, security and environment makes me feel safe to be around

There is good and helpful faculty which is mostly supportive to students.

We can meet any faculty or management member and can discuss our problems

Cause I don't do any mischief

Security guards everywhere and helpful people

Because of the environment and teachers

Closed infrastructure with familiar faces makes a safe campus

No racoing

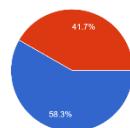
Recall an incident where there was a difficult situation/ conflict on your college campus.

115 responses

- I haven't experienced any major conflict personally
- Sometimes during fests there instances of fights amongst a few group of students
- no
- Every month or once in two months we have a fight in our college
- there was no such situation that affected me personally
- Physical abuse in front of the college canteen and outside the BBA bulding on two occasions.
- In Troika only when there were fights in Box Cricket
- Maybe out of college but not in college, till now I haven't seen any conflict in my campus

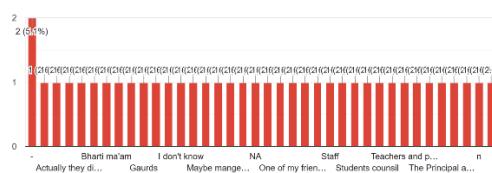
Did the college grievance machinery come to rescue?

115 responses



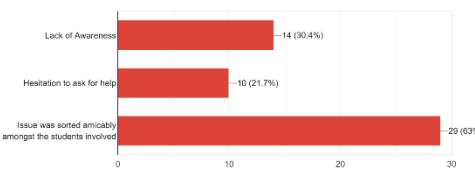
If yes, which college body came to rescue?

39 responses



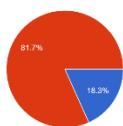
If Not, was it because of your-

46 responses



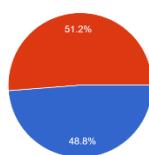
Have you or any of your friends faced a major health problem/ accident while on Campus?

115 responses



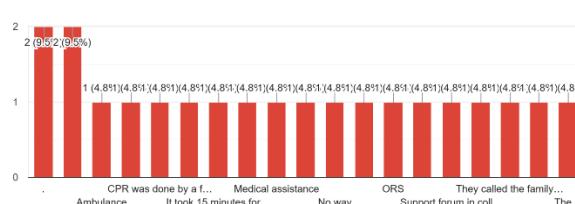
If yes, did the college come to your aid?

41 responses

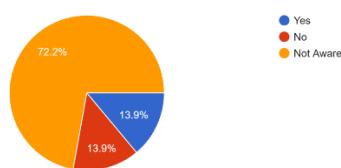


What kind of aid was provided?

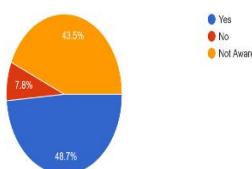
21 responses



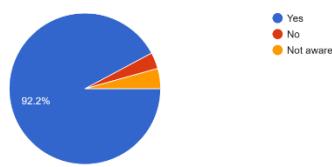
Do you have a medical officer/ Doctor on campus ?
115 responses



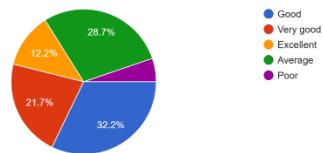
Psychologist/ Counsellor
115 responses



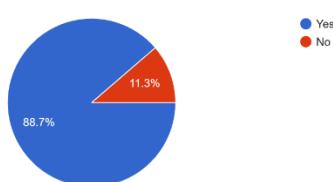
Meditation/ Yoga
115 responses



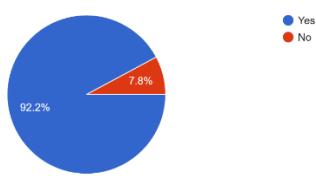
How is the flow of information in your college(Notices & Circulars)
115 responses



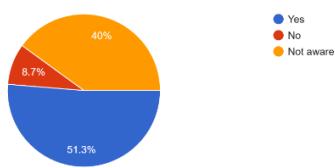
Do you have right to information with regard to answer sheets in examinations?
115 responses



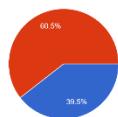
Do you have right to information with regard to revaluation in examinations?
115 responses



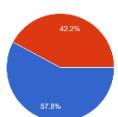
Do you have a Suggestion Box/ Ombudsman in college to answer your queries?
115 responses



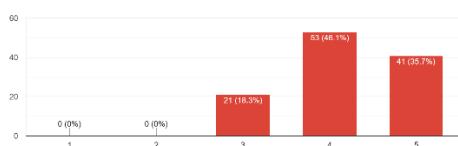
If yes, Do you give feedbacks/ suggestions to the college authorities?
 76 responses



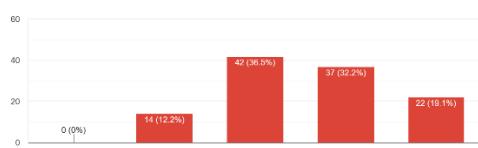
Do the college authorities act on your suggestions/ feedback?
 64 responses



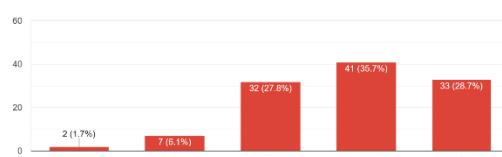
Peaceful
 115 responses



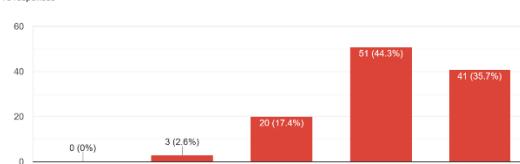
Justice
 115 responses



Equitable
 115 responses



Inclusive
 115 responses



A memory/ memories you would like to forget about your college.

115 responses

Not anything like that but if I could have changed my first few days which were very boring and the freshers party and emerge could have been better

My exam time. it has always been stressful for me during practical and theory examinations.

Physical abuses and lack of simplicity in most of the students.

The clerks are the worst clerks I have ever seen... their treatment towards us is very bad and just disgusting to even see their face and the worse part is they behave in same attitude with our parents

I would like to forget my first sem , the friends I meet were not true one , as I was always available for them but they always give excuses when I ask them to help me back

A very fond/ precious memory/ memories of college you would always hold close to your heart.

115 responses

After 1st sem the bond I formed was not bad, the type of friends I got were nice I loved hanging out with them

Being in astitva

Anubhuti

Winning emerge debate competition

Events

First day

College fests and events.

There are lots of memories from day one. From emerge to till this day.