

Best Practice I

Title of the Practice: Annamalai University Rejuvenates Aura of All (AURAA)

Objectives of the Practice:

1. To ensure and enhance the mental and physical well-being of the community of Chidambaram
2. To cater to the social and psychological needs of the senior citizens
3. To make the ambience of Chidambaram more lively
4. To provide recreational opportunities for the economically disadvantaged sections in and around Chidambaram
5. To channelize the children community through positive reinforcement of their energy
6. To transform the lives of the socially marginalized through Yoga

The Context:

As Chidambaram is set in a rural environ, the residents are suffering from the lack of amenities and avenues for engaging themselves in physical and mental fitness enhancing activities. The elderly community is in particular need space for socialization. Providing kids with play-zone and ambience is vital to divert the children out of the clutches of electronic gadgets and to maintain their mental and physical health. It is vital to bring about changes in attitude and approach towards life through anger management and self-analysis among prisoners.

Against these contexts, AURAA (Annamalai University Rejuvenates Aura of All), an integrated programme that fulfills the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of the community was envisioned. In line with the spiritual cosmic tradition of Chidambaram, the abode of Patanjali yoga, the Annamalai University, the house of academic accolades, has introduced AURAA as part of its commitment to the community. The programme ensures the availability of physical space, intellectual assistance and spiritual guidance to the local population entirely free of cost.

The Practice:

- Free access to children, parents and elders to a spacious and well-maintained Children's Park
- Providing free access to the walking corridors and University Pavilion inside the campus
- Pollution-free, cool, serene and oxy-rich environment that help to improve quality living
- University sports complex offers special coaching camps in many sports and games activities during summer holidays
- The campus offers space to socialize and hangout for the public in general and elders in particular even from nearby villages to improve their social bondage
- The Yoga Centre of the University is offering Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Meditation, Arulthanthai Vethathri Maharishi Meditation, Ramalinga Vallalar Meditation, Sri Aurobindo and Mother Meditation, and audio-visual programs to enhance the mental well-being through adoption of integrated approach of Yoga and Meditation.
- Enhanced social outreach through Yoga Therapy at RMMCH, a sub-centre at Parangipettai and meditation halls at various Hostels of Annamalai University
- University offers Pranayama practice for controlling emotions and streamlining thinking process of the prisoners
- University offers yoga training to Police personnel and other government officials for

- better stress management and increased efficiency in their work places
- Free oral cancer screening programmes are conducted regularly

Evidence of Success:

- The number of children, parents and elders visiting children's park has been on the increase
- Additional walking corridors had to be laid to accommodate the increasing number of daily walkers that include children, teens, adults, elders and women
- The number of children and students availing sports facilities in the campus has been going up.
- A record of 50000 students were trained by the Annamalai University Yoga Centre so far
- A mega event on International Yoga Day was successfully conducted
- A total of 60 prison inmates in Chennai, Madurai and Cuddalore prisons were imparted with yoga education and successfully obtained diploma and degree certificates. This programme was successfully implemented among Tihar and Sabarmati Central Jail inmates from 2010 onwards.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Problems

- Inundation of water over the playing area of Children's Park during the days of heavy rain
- Lack of sufficient space to accommodate the beneficiaries in the Yoga Centre
- Non availability of swimming pool and a dedicated vehicle parking

Resources Required

- Funding for establishment of a Swimming pool and a vehicle parking

Best Practice II

Title of the Practice: Annamalai University's Extra Education to Empower and Develop Students – AUEXEEDS

Objectives of the Practice:

AUEXEEDS is aimed at enhancing its on campus students with the following objectives:

- To improve the ability of students to think, analyse, synthesize, evaluate and apply the acquired knowledge in different allied concepts
- To empower the students with extra knowledge, skills and ability in line with their core study programme
- To facilitate the students become job ready with extra skills, technical knowhow and additional qualification of a diploma/certificate title
- To augment the ability of demographic population in university's reach to achieve relevant SDG Targets related to Skills and Employability

The Context:

The University education, as it is being an end in itself, is also a means to get a decent job, while lifelong learning is indispensable in order to keep pace with the changing skill requirement in job market. Hence, skill development is an essential prerequisite for attaining

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In the changing times, there is an impetus to acquire more knowledge from extra learning outside the conventional learning programmes. Only those who acquired additional qualifications attract employers. In rural outfit, where the University is located (Cuddalore District is one among the Most Disadvantaged districts in India) the opportunity for students to access concurrent learning programmes is less. In this context, **AUEXEEDS** was introduced to all on campus students to effectively utilize their time in campus and make them Job-Ready while ending their curricular programme with extra knowledge and skills.

Practice:

The wide array of Certificate, Diploma and PG Diploma programmes offered by the Directorate of Distance Education Centre at Annamalai University enables to undergo a wide range of extra concurrent learning opportunity. However, due to constraints such as guidance to choose an extra learning component, want of time to attend personal contact classes and practical sessions, and cost factor, very few students reap the benefit out of it. Hence, the University brought an arrangement with the DDE and introduced the following practices under

AUEXEEDS:

- Counselling and guidance to on campus students regarding concurrent extra learning opportunity
- Special waiver of tuition fee to the tune of 50 % in all programmes offered by DDE for on campus students
- Personal Contact Classes and Practicals of the DDE programmes are scheduled in such a way that they do not clash with schedules of their regular curricular programmes
- Synchronising on campus programme activities to cope up with concurrent extra learning programme schedule (PCB, Practical schedule and Theory examinations)

Evidence of Success:

- AUEXEEDS has so far attracted and benefitted 12541 on campus students to 70 diverse programmes offered by the DDE and awarded certificate/diploma/PG diploma titles during the last five years
- Improved the knowledge and skill of on campus students in the field of Nursery Management, Landscaping, Dairy technology, Safety Engineering, Hospital Management, Hotel management, Marketing, Fertilizer Technology, etc.
- Has offered great scope for interaction between on campus students and outside participants currently working in market which gives insight for students to decide their next step in career

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Problems

- Synchronising regular on campus programme activities to cope up with concurrent extra learning programme schedule

Resources Required

- Facilities to offer these concurrent learning programmes through MOOC mode
- Learning Management System (LMS) is required to offer e-content for the courses of various programmes

Best Practice III

Title of the Practice:

Biometric Attendance Management System, BAMS to incorporate transparency in the Staff Attendance System.

Objectives of the Practice:

In the changing times, there is an impetus to move from the conventional paper-based attendance to embrace the digital attendance system. Government is making it mandatory for Higher Education Institutions adopt biometric attendance system. There are concerns about the accountability of the staff regarding their presence and lack of transparency on the timing, leave approvals and entries. Biometric Machines to record the attendance of the staff of the University was an initiative by the Administrator / Principal Secretary to the Government after the Annamalai University Act of 2013 came into force. The system was further strengthened by developing the software, the BAMS, with an objective to provide complete attendance solution.

- To adopt e-governance in all transactions pertaining to Attendance System
- To bring in transparency and accountability in the process by providing proper checks and balances
- To encourage the ease of obtaining approvals and making appropriate entries for availing leave as per the rule book of the University
- To enable the Heads of Departments /Sections generate reports of different kinds

The Context:

Digitalization efforts are aimed to support and be part of the overall governance of the institution. Strategies have to be in place to arrive at an end-to-end solution to cater to the stakeholders of the University. In this context, Biometric Attendance Management System was developed to bring in accountability on the side of the Management and the Employees of the University as a whole.

Practice:

The BAMS, an in-house developed software, integrates the database of the Biometric Server to the website of the University. The system allows the Heads of Departments/Sections to

make leave entries, monitor and generate reports for various attendance shortcomings like “Not Reported”, “Single Punch” and “Hour Deficiency” in their biometric login. Further shifts for the staff can be pinned to calculate the working hours. The user can view their report and can sort out discrepancies in their leave entries and other related issues. The leaves are calculated with an opening balance fixed at the beginning of the calendar year. Regarding Earned Leave, the annual availed days are calculated for that particular year since there is non-availability the cumulative opening balance.

Evidence of Success:

- The BAMS has brought in the much-needed transparency
- In spite of initial reluctance, the system has been widely accepted
- It has imbibed a lot of accountability as the reports are viewed by the employers and by the employees
- The monthly skeleton gives an idea to the user as to where he/she stands on availing leaves and his/her punctuality

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Problems

- Resistance to change from the conventional practices
- Viewed as a tool for punitive action in case of defaulting
- Power problems can play spoilsport

Resources Required

- Digitalization involves a lot of resources, both personnel and finance
- Provision of robust networking and uninterrupted power supply to the machines and CCTV cameras
- Constant monitoring and trouble shooting

Best Practice IV

Title of the Practice: Student Ready Concept for Agriculture (SRCA)

Objectives of the Practice:

- To provide rural entrepreneurship awareness, practical experience in real-life situation in agriculture and creating awareness to undergraduate students about practical agriculture and allied sciences.
- To enable the learner observe, think, analyse, synthesize, evaluate and apply the acquired knowledge in different agriculture and allied concepts
- To promote entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through meaningful hands-on experience
- To build confidence, skill and acquire Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) of the locality and thereby preparing the pass-out for self-employment.

The Context:

The SRCA programme aims at providing rural entrepreneurship awareness and practical experience in real-life situation in practical agriculture and allied sciences through Experiential Learning Courses. It also aims to provide opportunities to acquire hands-on-experience and entrepreneurial skills. To reorient graduates of agriculture and allied subjects for ensuring and

assuring employability and develop entrepreneurs for emerging knowledge intensive agriculture, Hence, it was felt necessary to introduce this program in Faculty of Agriculture, Annamalai University.

The Practice:

The following components are practised under SRCA programme in both B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture and B.Sc. (Hons.) Horticulture programmes.

- Experiential Learning (EL) on Business Model / Hands on Training
- Experiential Learning on Skill Development
- Rural Awareness Works Experience (RAWE)
- Internship In-Plant Training / Industrial attachment

All the above-mentioned interactive components are conceptualized for building skills in project development and execution, decision-making, individual and team-coordination, approach to problem solving, accounting, quality control, marketing and resolving conflicts, etc. with end to end approach.

- Experiential Learning is an opportunity for the students to develop high quality professional competence, skill development and confidence to start their own enterprise. This is a step towards “Earn while learn”. Experiential Learning aims towards Practical Work Experience in Real Life Situation among the undergraduate students and therefore it helps student become “Job Providers rather than Job Seekers”.
- Rural Awareness Works Experience enable the students to gain rural experience, give them confidence by enhancing their problem-solving abilities in real life situations
- In-plant training of short duration in relevant industry is useful to gain the knowledge and experience of the work culture. In Plant training in reputed organization / MNC's/ other organised sectors provides an industrial exposure to the students for developing their career in the Agro based industries.
- Skill development component includes use of Agriculture Systems and devices for enhancing functional skills. It is expected that basic infrastructure and Experiential Learning Units in the university will help in boosting livelihood ensuring opportunities among the Agricultural graduates.

Evidence of Success:

- The Experiential Learning courses offered in B.Sc. (Hons.) Horticulture programme successfully imparted best skills in Nursery management, post-harvest value addition and processing industries, landscape gardening and hi-tech vegetable production from the academic year 2015-2016 onwards.
- Every year students have been placed in various industries where they have got trained up
- Every year the number of students embracing new business venture is increasing
- Based on the success rate obtained B.Sc. (Hons.) Horticulture programme, the same has been incorporated in B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture from the academic year 2019 onwards

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Problems

- Lack of availability of enough number of experiential units
- As the university is situated in a coastal-agro ecosystem, which has mono cropping, predominantly rice based, prone to flash floods and soil salinity makes

sustainability of certain Experiential Learning units becomes difficult

- Lack of enough revolving funds to make the student groups accommodated

Resources Required

- Funding for establishment of new Experiential Learning units of potentially income generating modules
- Establishment of incubation centre to support all Experiential Learning units