

EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS (PART-2)

EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENTS IN SOCIAL COMMITMENT

(Championing Social Responsibility & Community Engagement)

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIVEKANANDA EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE (RKMVERI)

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY AS DECLARED BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA UNDER SECTION 3 OF UGC ACT, 1956)

[Formerly Known as "Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University"]

(Accredited by NAAC with A++ grade)

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Extraordinary Achievement 1: - The Role of Traditional Ceremonies in Fostering a Ragging-Free Environment: A Case Study of the Vidyarthi-vrata Ceremony at Our University

1.1 Background of the Practice

One of the healthiest traditions at our Institution Deemed-to-be-University, a nearly century-old legacy derived from Ramakrishna Mission educational institutions nationwide, is the observance of a unique ceremony called vidyarthi-vrata-homa. This ceremony, conducted within a few weeks of a student joining the Institution, signifies the taking of vows as a knowledge-seeker, a student, a learner.

1.2 Objectives

- Instil a strong commitment to building life, character, integrity, and ethics to contribute to nation-building.
- Familiarize students with the cultural and spiritual traditions of India.
- Develop better relationships and social integration among members of the University community, fostering a sense of belonging and unity.
- Orient students to campus life and the ideas and ideologies of the Ramakrishna Mission and our University.

1.3 The Context

In the current landscape of higher education, there is a dire need to orient students towards positive, age-old cultural values of India. This orientation aims to build character and steer students away from unhealthy activities such as ragging, corruption, violence, and selfishness, fostering a community of individuals with positive intentions to create a better and developed society.

1.4 The Practice

This elevating ceremony serves as our Freshers' Welcome, where Seniors cordially accept Juniors by tying Rakhi on their hands, symbolizing acceptance as their brothers. This gesture creates an atmosphere of love and harmony, countering the menace of ragging prevalent in many educational institutions. Freshers take life and society-building vows, helping them inculcate moral values that contribute to personal and national development while fostering a love for our ancient spiritual traditions.

The students pledge to adhere to five essential vows for a true knowledge-seeker, which they are charged to uphold in letter and spirit. These vows are reaffirmed at the end of their respective programs and again at convocation when they receive their degrees and diplomas, serving as a lifelong agreement and covenant.

These five vows are universal in nature and emphasize higher human values at the individual and collective level. In summary, these five vows emphasize the following values:

1. Physical fitness, healthy living through exercise, self-restraint and pure habits
2. Lifelong devotion to the pursuit and cultivation of knowledge and wisdom
3. Practice of truthfulness in thought, word and deed
4. Cultivating an attitude of selfless service, compassion and liberal outlook
5. Striving for social cohesion and gelling in team/group endeavours, enlightened and responsible citizenship.

1.5 Evidence of Success

- No incidents of ragging reported on our campuses.
- Formation of strong, loving bonds with the University community that endure even after students leave campus.
- Our students are appreciated by employers not only for their intellectual abilities and skills but also for their character, behavior, and commitment to their goals.

- This ceremony help students to inculcate moral values, contributing to both personal and national development, while fostering a love for our ancient spiritual tradition.

Extraordinary Achievement 2:- Empowering Youth through Education and Skill (EYES)

2.1 Objective

To bringing tribal students to the mainstream of education through formal and non-formal education

2.2 Context

Faculty of ARTD is located in the TSP (Tribal Sub plan) district of Jharkhand. Locational advantages generate an opportunity to empower the tribal brethren of our county so that they can stand on their own feet

2.3 Practice

- i) Offering 5-year integrated (B.Sc.+ M.Sc.) course in Agriculture, Rural & Tribal Development, which is not an unique but a true blend of naturalistic and humanistic sciences that fulfils the requirement of educating first generation learners of tribal community.
- ii) Running fulltime residential agribusiness incubation centre for providing skill based handholding support to become successful entrepreneur

2.4 Evidence of Success

After completing study or incubation period

- i) Most of them are working as development professional
- ii) Serving their own villages
- iii) Most of the incubates started their own enterprise by establishing, poultry, nursery etc

2.5 Success Story

From 'Cow Herder' to Development Professional

Somra Bedia, a cowherd boy and sole bread winner for his family hailing from Bedia tribal community entered in the academic fold of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ranchi at the

age of 15 as a trainee. After successful completion of training and Intermediate through NIOS, he took admission in the Integrated M.Sc. course in ARTD of RKMVERI and completed successfully in 2013. Currently he is employed as Agriculture Officer at Action for Social Advancement (ASA) and getting Salary of Rs. 30,000 per month.

Extraordinary Achievement 3: Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE)

3.1 Objectives

Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE) is a rural immersion programme where the MSc students in the Agriculture and Rural Development programme are sent to the remote villages for nearly two weeks each in March and September every year. They stay in the village, learn from the villagers, and apply both contextual and classroom learning to bring positive changes in rural communities. The programme was initiated to actualise an alternative, liberating pedagogical approach to make classroom teaching meaningful. It was also meant to inculcate the value of 'service to the society' in mainstream education.

3.2 The Context

There were two contexts for launching the RLLE programme. First, evidence suggests that the complexities of rural realities are best understood in the villages only and overdependence on the textbooks limits students' ability to learn and act meaningfully in solving the agrarian problems. Experiences drawn from the history of rural development across the globe show that positive changes in rural areas happen when the development agents have the skill to understand and facilitate self-mobilisation in a community. RLLE aims to develop such qualities among the students. Second, experiential learning in a real-life context expands the scope of learning and development from 'self' to 'others', thus opening up the possibility of 'learning through changing others'. A self-critically aware mindset is instilled in the students and the villagers, which is, in essence, a liberating pedagogy and aligns well with Swami Vivekananda's principle of 'empowerment through participation and learning'.

3.3 The Practice

As a part of RLLE, all the students of the MSc in Agriculture and Rural Development Programme are mandatorily sent to rural areas for nearly two weeks every year. The village stay is divided into two segments – a) Community Study Segment – The students gain experience of the village life and its people, study the rural system in its entirety,, and understand the areas where their learned knowledge may be applied. b) Community

Action Plan – here, the students prepare a community action plan for the villagers to expand their vision and solve some of the existing problems. The students also act upon the plan and document the process in the form of a report.

The RLLE report is submitted to the IRDM Faculty Centre, and the Community Action Plans are sometimes submitted to the grassroots-level organisation to which the students are often attached. The whole process is monitored by the faculty mentors and evaluated rigorously at the Faculty Centre.

Since the students are placed (2-4 in a group) at 4-6 different locations with limited/no electricity or internet/telephone connectivity, monitoring becomes a severe constraint. Moreover, since the programme is not funded, the mobility of students also becomes difficult. Also, implementing the community action plans sometimes requires small funding supports for meaningful intervention (procurement of agri-input, materials required for preparation of Information-Education-Communication materials), which is often not forthcoming.

3.4 Evidence of Success

RLLE was launched primarily to immerse the students into the rural setting for gaining first-hand knowledge of the 'real India'. We did not set any explicit target for the programme and confined the evaluation to students' educational outcomes. We evaluate the students rigorously through formal procedures where they have performed persistently well over the years. In the students' feedback, they have expressed the importance of RLLE in their course curriculum.

With time, we started encouraging our students to submit the study outcomes (field study and draft community action plans in the form of project proposals) to the attached grassroots organisations to take the process forward in the visited communities when the students come back. We now plan to study the impact of RLLE on the students and communities through evidence-based research.

Every year, the students teach novel agricultural techniques to hundreds of farmers, generate awareness of women and rural youth, and teach school children about diverse life-skills issues. Since its inception, more than 300-unit students have visited nearly 100 communities and reached more than 10,000 villagers directly and indirectly.

3.5 Problems encountered and resources required

The most significant problem of engaging students in remote villages is their safety and security. Also, close monitoring of the students and assessing the programme's impact on them and communities is tough to maintain along with the regular teaching-learning process. Despite established informal linkages with grassroots-level organisations, meaningfully engaging students for nearly two weeks asks for improved institutional capacity to mentor, monitor and measure the programme impact.

For successful implementation of RLLE, an institution would need a sound orientation of students regarding the rural realities. A written guideline is also needed to help students understand the programme philosophy and its implementation modalities. A dedicated resource-pool (human and financial) is also required to assist students during the field placements to create more impact on the communities and strengthen students' educational outcomes.

Extraordinary Achievement 4: - Mānasollāsinī Pariṣat (मानसोल्लासिनी परिषत्)

This is formulated as a platform for the students of Sanskrit to develop their language skills. And it literally means "An assembly or a forum that entertains and encourages the mind."

4.1 Objectives

Mānasollāsinī Parishat literally means 'An assembly or a forum that entertains and encourages the mind'. The main objectives of the Mānasollāsinī Parishat, in short Mānasollāsinī, are both subject-centered and student-centered. Subject-centered because we focus on reviving the Sanskrit language and traditions through Mānasollāsinī. And it is student-centered or learner-centered because by actively participating in the Mānasollāsinī and thus continuously using and experimenting with different Sanskrit knowledge traditions, students become great experts in the field. Mānasollāsinī encourages the students to feel comfortable in Sanskrit and thus enliven the Sanskrit language and traditions.

4.2 The Context

There are flaw in the usual method of teaching Sanskrit at the University level. Sanskrit teaching is treated as a stagnant tradition of the past. This method is tolerable, but not for those who want Sanskrit to flourish and perpetuate age old culture, values and traditions.

Therefore correcting this flaw meant providing frequent opportunities to the Sanskrit learners, outside the classroom, an informal setup, to use and practice and be creative in Sanskrit language.

In our society, Sanskrit is not a language heard spoken very often. Apart from the high veneration offered to it, its classical prose form is not much understood and used, unlike other Indian languages. So the institute has to create an atmosphere where Sanskrit is put to use.

Mānasollāsinī fulfills this purpose.

4.3 The Practice

This best practice of the Department is basically a students' forum, managed and organised by the senior students with the guidance of the faculty. Some of the programs they conduct

are based on the curriculum they study, and some other programs are outside their curriculum but within the Sanskrit field or even pertaining to current affairs. The Mānasollāsinī Parishat is structured as ganās and gānāyākās, sanchālakās and Parishat-sadasyās, nirṇayākās and upadeshtā, all the prominent positions being occupied by the students.

The year-long activities of the Mānasollāsinī Parishat are charted week wise and student wise- individual and in groups. Parishat convenes the Sāptāhika-samāroha the weekend session.

Coming to the Activities of the Mānasollāsinī Parishat - they are designed to meet the objectives of the Parishat. All activities have one thing specially in focus i.e. they should help the students in developing cognitive and creative skills in Sanskrit language. In order to be creative in Sanskrit, they have opportunity to compose poetry and recite them, and receive critical appreciation of the students and faculty. They can speak on different topics and debate on them. And perform traditional co-curricular practices such as Shalaka-pariksha, Vākyārtha, Vāda-kathā, Antyākshari, Samasyāpurti etc.

They even utilise the Sanskrit Rupakās by revamping and performing them, as an effective means of enhancing academic excellence. When you prepare for a drama, you have to conceive an idea, give it a presentable form keeping all the constraints of the stage and expectations of the viewers, compose the dialogues, smemorise them.

4.4 Evidence of Success

Mānasollāsinī boosted the confidence of our students with little knowledge of Sanskrit even in the first year of their study. In six months, they start speaking fluent Sanskrit. Write all the examinations entirely in Sanskrit. They take part in state and national level competitions subsequently.

They could present very outstanding performance in even traditional institutions that are home ground for Sanskrit erudition and scholarship, such as Shringeri Math, and won prestigious awards - to the best of our knowledge for the first time from West Bengal.

Mānasollāsinī helped the students to showcase their academic excellence even in the curriculum. Every year students in good number qualify in the National Eligibility Test (NET) with high percentage of marks and either pursue further research or become college teachers.

4.5 Problems encountered and resources required

Availability of qualified resource persons more so from traditional circles who can add value to this project is a perpetual shortcoming.

Extraordinary Achievement 5: - Training on Selective Adapted Games for Developing Motor Skills for Persons with Disabilities

5.1 Background of the Practice

Although basic physical access to sports facilities in India has improved significantly in recent years, the majority of existing sports facilities still do not fully meet the sports and recreational requirements of Persons with disabilities. With all the assistive technology advancements at best Wheelchair and prostheses are the major supports for PwDs in the sports arena. There is a gap to be bridged with more adapted sports and games, gadgets & facilities for their actual participation in sports. Adapted games are conventional games that have been modified to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities. Adapted games are shown to improve overall physical & motor skills, increase life satisfaction, decrease depressive symptoms, and develop a positive identity in persons with a disability. If proper trainings and opportunities are provided to persons with disabilities, they also can participate and contribute to our country.

5.2 Objectives

- To transmute conventional games into adapted games for persons with disabilities.
- To provide more opportunity for the competent disabled to actively participate in sports.
- To create adapted games training platform and provide opportunities to participate in the state/ national level competitions for the persons with disabilities.
- To organise on/off campus awareness programme for persons with disabilities, coaches, parents, and care givers on adapted sports and motor activity training programme.
- To adequately provide appropriate training in adapted games suitable to the players of the disabled to be competent enough to perform in various competitions.
- To empower the teacher trainees to get sfamiliarised with the rules and regulations of adapted sports and games.
- To orient and train the coaches, players and athletes of various categories of disabilities about the latest and updated rules of various adapted games.

5.3 The Context

Sedentary lifestyle and secondary diseases are on a rise in India affecting even the young people with and without disabilities. Cases of diabetes and hypertension are on the rise and common among young children in India. But small lifestyle changes can prevent these lifestyle diseases. '**Fit India Movement**' is an effort to bring these small lifestyle changes. This practice is in line with our national mission 'FIT INDIA MOVEMENT'. The "**Sport for All**" movement no doubt rekindled interest worldwide in physical education for all.

Owing to the limited opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in sports and games, there is a greater demand for exploring the alternative models to be augmented to offer challenging, recreational, training, and competitive sport experiences. Adapted games

are an innovative play method program, designed for persons with disabilities to the world of sports to overcome such limitations. Optimal development and sport success for persons with disabilities is almost always the product of multiple factors like opportunity, effort, and consistent training over many years. However, quality sports training are also recognised as an important influence on players' success. Considering the above imperative significance and importance of adapted games, every year our faculty organises adapted games for persons with disabilities under four major types of disabilities (Intellectual Disability, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment and Physical Impairment), giving them opportunity to develop physical & motor skills, experience joy and participate in sports competition.

5.4 The Practice

- At the first step, disabled students in special schools and colleges who are willing to participate in sports and games get prepared for taking part in competitions are identified for this training. For this purpose, orientation programs are conducted every year in which physical education professionals of respective institutions participate.
- The interested disabled students are then oriented towards various adapted games and sports applicable to them. They further get selected for various games based on prerequisite skills and talent.
- This training per rules is conducted for 4 weeks with initial and final assessment of performance of every individual player. Based on outcome of assessment, reinforcement sessions will be conducted for two weeks for those who are willing to improve their performance.
- Around 60 teacher trainees of physical education programme are involved in giving this training for around 120 persons with disabilities every year.
- The following teaching-learning method suitable to adapted physical education settings is applied during the training:
 - ❖ Supervised exercise training is an important issue in developing physical fitness among persons with disabilities.
 - ❖ In order to train the persons with disabilities, the individual attention is provided to every player based on the onset and degree of disability, strength, capability and confidence limit of every individual.
 - ❖ Fundamental motor skills and sports specific training modules were designed and implemented using principles of sports training namely consistency, progression and overload during the entire training phase.

5.5 Evidence of Success

Adapted sports and games are sports that allow participation of all populations with inclusion of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, specially created chairs, and modified ramp equipment, and so on. The following are the outcomes of participating in adapted games:

- Increased muscular strength and endurance
- Improved quality of life, including mood and well-being, socialisation, independence

- enhanced functional capacity and ability to complete activities of daily living
- increased understanding of parents of the disabled regarding the importance of adapted sports and games for their children

5.6 Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The following are the problems encountered:

- Need for adapted sports equipment for sports training for persons with disability.
- Need for transportation for persons with disability to sports arena.

5.7 Resources Required

- Human resources like qualified physical educationists, physiotherapists, special education teachers, and social workers.
- In general, outdoor areas should be safe, accessible, with clean air, and ample protection from the sun and rain.

Extraordinary Achievement 6:- Pre-Vocational training for developing Effective Transition skills for Persons with Disabilities

6.1 Background

According to the demand of preparing workforce and maintaining quality of life among persons with disabilities as per UNCRPD, the training is being imparted among the teacher trainees of B.Ed. & M.Ed., so as to bridge the gap between two ends: community and PwDs and, bring the transition phase at ease among them.

So, alleviating youth unemployment and employment instability, re-shaping vocational education to meet real workplace requirements, and facilitating school-to-work transition by enhancing skills and work competency of PwDs becomes a clear reason to initiate this practice among the teacher trainees.

6.2 Objectives

- To make the teacher trainees know and understand the intervention principles for delivering effective transition services.
- To enable the trainees to understand the important vocational skills necessary for providing vocational training.
- To provide hands-on experience for the trainees in imparting vocational skills along with disabled children.
- To create the scope for interdisciplinary studies to specify the effective models for transition of PwDs

6.3 Framework of the Practice

Intervention Principles: The following are the several key principles of intervention for effective transition services.

- Teach at natural times, using naturally occurring cues, reinforcers, and consequences
- Teach in natural environments and Use real materials
- Teach all day and across environments to promote generalisation
- Use partial participation (What part of a task can the student do?)
- Keep student data to determine effectiveness of intervention
- Integrate student with nondisabled peers and expose to functional activities

The following are the important vocational skills necessary for effective transition:

Job search skills: Students with disabilities need instruction in skills like conducting a personal job search, filling out job applications correctly, preparing a resume, and how to give interview etc.

Job maintenance skills: Job success depends more on effective job maintenance skills such as communication and interpersonal skills and good work habits than upon actual job skills. Researches on vocational training emphasis that the vital factors to job success for workers with disabilities are : a) getting along well with others; b) interest in the job; c) efficiency; d) dependability; and e) being able to adapt to new work situations.

Job-related functional academics: Reading and writing on the job, figuring computations, estimating, making change, and using time wisely are functional academic skills that can be taught in the classroom to help students succeed on the job. Students with special needs are unable to generalise transitional academics to the real world of employment and adult living

Mobility and Transportation skills: Students cannot be successful on the job if they are not effectively trained in mobility and transportation skills. Hence, the school curriculum at secondary level should include opportunities for students to learn, practice and generalise the skills of:

Applying for bus passes; reading and interpreting bus route information; using public transit safety including road safety and emergency strategies; using actual routes from home and school to places of work; and traveling independently from home to school to a work site.

The course content of transition covering all the above vital issues have been included in the special education curriculum wherein ample opportunities are provided to the teacher trainees that include hands on experiences to advocacy and rights of PwDs. The institute not only provides training in handling transition among PwDs, but also strives for their vocational placement. In this exercise the teacher trainees get opportunity to develop functional assessment checklists and they undergo standardisation of the same, pertaining to various disabilities in consultation of the experts.

6.4 Outcome of the practice

- Teacher trainees prepare a detail record of the training imparted by them.
- They conduct various orientation and awareness programs, health camps; they get involved in direct and indirect services provisions both. Thus, it becomes a two-way process of growth and development.
- PwDs get benefited as they get individual attention and intervention which leads the increment in their self esteem and quality of life.

6.5 Problems Encountered

- There are major differences between the education and labour market contexts. Increased efforts should be made to strengthen the relationship between schools and employers.
- Lack of training adequate work habits, personal social skills, and job-related social skills.
- Less accessibility to get know about the successful employers who provide suitable employment opportunities to the disabled based on effective transitional plan.
- Non-availability of a repository of resources on employment avenues for the disabled.

6.6 Resources Required

- Appropriate vocational training , professional development and work experience for trainers
- Physical resources that are of industry standard
- Quality supervision of student job placements
- Improved collaboration with vocational training providers
- Partnership between schools offering vocational training programmes.

Extraordinary Achievement 7: Teaching, Research and Extension through Alternate Techniques (TREAT) the COVID-19

7.1 Objective

Ensure continuous engagement of every students and faculty in the teaching-learning process during lockdown

7.2 Context

Due to the spread of COVID-19, institutions closed down their physical campuses and began to move students to remote learning

7.3 Practice

- i. Full-fledged online teaching using virtual platform, social sites, recorded lectures etc.
- ii. Research through (especially Social Research) 'Native Researcher' Model
- iii. Developed Mobile App (Vivek Jaivik Krishi) - Consultancy support to farmers and rural entrepreneurs
- iv. Multi-mode Evaluation and Assessment of students

7.4 Evidence of Success

- i. Participation of each and every student in the virtual session due to the adoption of multiple strategies to reach the unreached.
- ii. First time, Faculty centre successfully conducted online examinations of the final year students using online software.
- iii. Online system created new opportunity for the slow learners to clarify doubts in 1-on-1 discussions without inhibitions
- iv. Faculty centre successfully continued data collection of three research projects during the lockdown period by following the 'native researcher' model.
- v. A team of researcher from the faculty centre also conducted a study on preparedness of the rural Jharkhand to fight pandemic using the same strategy

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