

BEST PRACTICES

1. AGROPARK

- **OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE:** AGROPARK is an inexhaustible platter that consists of a number of initiatives like ‘Elixir’(Bee Farming), ‘Miyawaki forest’, ‘Pocket Garden’ (Cultivation on Campus Area), ‘Blue Serene’ (Pisciculture). The main objectives of this initiative are:
 - To preserve the ecology of the campus through environment-friendly practices.
 - To promote organic farming practices and agroforestry within the campus.
 - To turn the barren unused land of the college into productive land.
 - To raise awareness about the significance of farming in mitigating the global food crisis.
 - To offer the students hands-on training on various agriculture options such as crop farming, pisciculture, bee farming, etc.

The initiative has provided the students with an opportunity to learn more about the environment they live in. They are also gifted with practical knowledge of how to care for and nurture the vegetation and other life forms.

- **THE CONTEXT:** The initiative of AGROPARK was set up initially to utilise the vast amount of land that was available in the institution. The diligence of the NSS, NCC, Nature Club, Bhoomitrasena and the other clubs successfully transformed the land into cultivable areas. Thus the area around campus was divided and transformed into mini-projects like the Pocket Gardens, Weedless farming, Miyawaki Forest, and Blue Serene. Other initiatives like Elixir and a cow were also adopted later. In the post-covid scenario, the college ramped up the AGROPARK initiative to provide a helping hand for the people who were struggling to overcome the ravages of the pandemic. The state of Kerala has always been well-known for its agrarian society, pleasant climate and cleanliness. However, in the past few years due to global changes in climate and varied lifestyles of people, the pattern of food & agriculture has completely changed along with increased rates of diseases and

deteriorated living conditions. The post-Covid food scarcity added to this issue. The NSS, NCC, Nature club and Bhoomitrasena along with the support of all the departments and the Local government thus organized diverse programmes such as Vanamaholsavam, Thanalorukkam Vilavedukkam, Green Energy, etc. These activities also fall under the AGROPARK initiative.

- **THE PRACTICE:** Under the AGROPARK initiative, the college grounds have been efficiently utilised for the cultivation of many crops. Upland paddy is the major crop cultivated along with corn and small-scale horticulture. The college also practices weedless farming which provides some of the best organic products. Apart from land cultivation, one of the most popular initiatives under AGROPARK is Blue Serene. ‘Blue Serene’ is the pisciculture initiative of the college, that was set up with the aim of providing students hands-on training on how to breed fish in commercially viable ways. ‘Elixir’ was likewise initiated to familiarise students with the possibilities of bee-keeping and the profitable nature of the endeavour. The college has also hosted many programmes under the initiative. One of these was an initiative to set up a mini forest under the “Vanamaholsavam” programme where the NSS unit, Nature club and ‘BhoomithraSena’ in association with the Kerala State Forest Department planted tree saplings within the span of the college. This programme was inaugurated by Honourable Minister (Forest & Wildlife), Sri. A K Saseendran. The NSS unit and Nature Club in association with the “Thanalorukkam Vilavedukkam” Programme of City Police planted fifty cashew saplings on the campus. Another activity conducted by the Nature club is the cultivation of Black Gram and Tapioca in association with the Subhiksha Keralam Project of the Kerala Government, the Agriculture Department, NSS and the Staff Association of our college. The inauguration of the program was held on August 17 by the famous actor cum MLA Mukesh. MLA Jayalal also presided over the function. Apart from these, a plastic-free campus, proper solid waste management practices, energy saving measures such as the use of LED bulbs, installation of solar panels etc are followed in the college.
- **EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:** Owing to the hardwork and diligence of the students and the various clubs engaged in the AGROPARK initiative, the initiative has slowly grown to envelop new projects and innovative cultivation practices. All the projects that fall under the initiative are cared for and nurtured by the students and staff. The good quality crops

which were harvested from the land and the healthy fish and honeybees prove that the diligence of our students has paid off. Some of these final products are even sold in the nearby cooperative society markets. The resounding success of the AGROPARK initiative is thus evident. The programme also brought a transformation in the attitude of the students as they became more environmentally conscious, with some even turning to farming practices as a source of income.

- **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED:** With every innovative idea comes its own set of challenges. In the case of the AGROPARK initiative, the most daunting challenge was the expense to convert the barren land of the institution into arable land. With meticulous planning and teamwork, this was eventually overcome. The next big challenge was the busy academic schedule of the students and teachers. It was a challenge to find time amidst the busy university schedule to tend to the projects that came under AGROPARK. Farming practices require consistent care and constant attention. A lapse in this regard could lead to the initial efforts being wasted. However the students and teachers came together to find time for these activities and succeeded in balancing out their academic commitments with their extracurricular activities.

2. WE-CARE - EMBRACING HUMANITY

- **OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE:** We-Care cares for the oppressed and the suppressed among us. We-Care is an initiative of SN College, Chathannur which was formed to ‘give back to the society’. On realising the need to build a strong social conscience in the students, the institution came up with the idea to organise activities that provide relief for those struggling to lead happy lives. These activities were brought under the umbrella initiative of ‘We-Care’. The core objectives of the initiative are as follows;
 - To inculcate humanitarian principles like sharing and caring among the students
 - To build a strong social conscience in the hearts of the students
 - To impart value-based education to the students
 - To instil a love for fellow beings

- To encourage students from underprivileged classes and economically backward class students to pursue higher education.
 - Increasing the harmony among the students.
- **THE CONTEXT:** Since the location of the college is a rural area, a majority of the students are socio-economically backward. This demographic meant that certain groups of students were less likely to attend classes, and consequently, these students were more likely to underperform. It was not that they were not talented or lacked understanding, the primary reason for their poor performance was their preoccupation with their financial and subsequent emotional struggles. The cause was ascertained through counselling sessions and PTA meetings. As a result of their financial backwardness, the families of these students were seen to experience food shortages and other challenges. This in turn affects the education of these students. We-Care intervened and organised a programme whereby the socio-economically well-off students bring homely food for their classmates who are in need. Later, We-Care made it a point to extend such relief programmes for not only the students but also those outside the college. From adopted villages, to mentally challenged children and even elderly people, We-Care extended a helping hand to all those in need. The students were also sensitised to the struggles of the less fortunate and they were encouraged to actively participate in the initiative to provide what help they can. The different clubs and departments of the institution came together to ensure the success of this initiative.
- **THE PRACTICE:** One of the programmes conducted under this initiative was the distribution of menstrual cups and pads to the students and women from our adopted village. Another practice is the 'Pothe Choru' (feeding the needy) which was overseen by the various departments and the Ethics Committee of the college. Under this practice, those students who come from economically well-off families brought food packets and deposited them in their respective departments. These were then distributed to the needy ones during recess. The students also visited old age homes and distributed food to the elderly. They conversed with the elderly and asked after their health and well-being. The inmates of the old age home seemed visibly happier at having new faces to spend time

with. Other activities that were conducted under the initiative include awareness programmes for adopted villages and relief programmes like ‘One Day One Rupee Project’, ‘Hand Sanitiser Production’ and ‘Palliative Care Programme’.

- **EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:** The ‘Pothe Choru’ initiative has led to a rise in attendance among students and most of them continued their studies. The other activities like ‘One Day One Rupee Project’, ‘Hand Sanitiser Production’ and ‘Palliative Care Programme’ has also led to a strong sense of social responsibility in the students. It has also been observed that more and more students are coming forward with new ideas to extend relief practices. Similarly, there has been an increase in students who are volunteering to take part in these activities.
- **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED:** The biggest challenge of the scheme is the identification of deserving candidates. For instance, during the ‘Pothe Choru’ initiative some students don’t come forward to receive the parcel out of embarrassment. And in the case of other outreach activities, we faced a similar challenge in identifying deserving candidates. However, through surveys, we overcame said problem and thus ensured that help was given to the most deserving candidates.