



Amrita Kiranam

(a Special issue)

a snapshot of happenings at

AMRITA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, KOCHI

HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS THROUGH AMRITA VALUES PROGRAMME



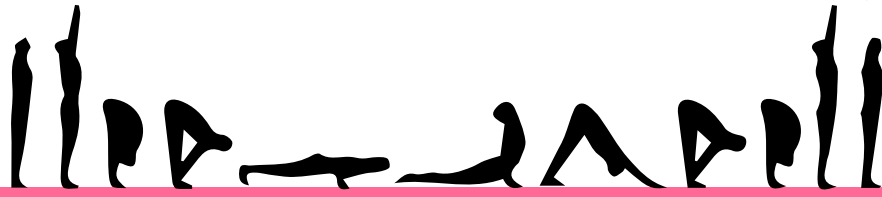
Amrita Values Programme (AVP)

Amrita Values Programme (AVP) is an initiative of the Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham aimed at the holistic development of students through the exposure to different facets of life by taking them through a panorama of the richness and beauty of India's culture and tradition. The perspective of the programme takes one through the traditions of living, amusing history, culture, art, aesthetic cuisine and nature of the country. Fulfilling the advice given by Amma, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Kochi campus emphasizes on making students familiar with the rich tapestry of Indian ethos and heritage. We are glad to share the experience gained by the campus community having being part of the AVP. The programme gave ample choice for the students based on their innate desires. The course schedules and the facilitation of shared wisdom from many learned faculty, scientists and professionals were all regulated and monitored directly by **Dr. U. Krishnakumar**, Director, and **Prof. K.R. Shabu** in Commerce and Management.

A prelude to the AVP

The philosophy of sanatana dharma prescribes different routes to understand the inherent divinity in everyone of us through a systematic attunement of our own nature with the universal consciousness. The charm and beauty of our dharma is that it's a way of life suitable for everyone cutting across barriers of faith, religion, work culture, intellectual ability and even the country. Thus it provides opportunities for those interested in the practice of Karma yoga, Raja yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana yoga. This basic philosophical thought embodies the way the AVP sessions are practiced here.

The Kochi campus offers various types of AVP courses as part of the academic curriculum for its regular UG, PG and research students viz., Yoga and Meditation, Life Style and Therapy using Yoga, Organic farming (Theory and Practice), Indian Systems of Medicine, Ayurveda for Healthy Lifestyle, Insights from Ramayana and Mahabharata and Temple Mural arts in Kerala. Students are free to choose the course they like and pursue it for the whole year as elective, i.e. for two semesters. Students get one credit in each semester for AVP after the evaluation of their performance in the theoretical and practical components.



Rajayoga the Way of Life style and Therapy



In the Bhagavat Gita, yoga is expounded as – “Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam”, which means yoga is perfection in action. It is an amazing tradition or a way of life with a history of more than five thousand years. The power of yoga lies in its simplicity, flexibility and diversity. The yogic philosophy and its various techniques can be followed by anyone and everyone in any setting at any age. Interestingly yoga can be adapted and merged into any

lifestyle with ease. This broad scope of yoga embedded with the essence of ancient Indian Culture made us to include it as a part of AVP. Practical training in yoga asanas or postures, pranayama and meditation with a sound theoretical base supplemented by theory classes on selected verses of Ashtanga Yoga are imparted to students. The course also includes the effect of yoga on integrated personality development. Yoga is also seen as a counter-balance to the current stressful lifestyle,



which lacks proper exercise and relaxation. The programme aims at the holistic development of students. More than hundred students from various batches pursued yoga and meditation as their AVP. Smt. **Sonia Chellerian**, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Languages who is also a professional yoga teacher and therapist handled the classes. Sreelekshmi of B.Com. 2015 batch and her friends expressed their euphoric feelings that yoga and meditation classes in the college freed them from stress and they enjoyed the relaxation.



Karmayoga through Organic Farming Practices



'Sustainability over the long term' is the core objective of Organic farming. It is a proactive approach towards human sustainability and healthy life. Through this AVP, the campus aims at empowering the students with the basic skills in practicing farming without the use of chemicals and pesticides. In a way, our students play a great role in the ecological and social transformation through this programme. More than eighty students from Undergraduate and Post Graduate batches opted Organic Farming as one their AVP courses. Scientists from ICAR Krishi Vijnana Kendra (KVK) and Rice Research Station of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) offered the lessons on



scientific approaches in Organic Farming. Under the persistent support from **Dr. U. Krishnakumar, Prof. K.R. Shabu**, Coordinator and other fellow teachers, who also took keen interest in attending all sessions, students have planted, watered, cared and nurtured more than a dozen of vegetables in hundreds of grow bags and in field and terrace. They even prepared a biodiversity register relating to more than 100 plants and wild species. The course has also enriched the biodiversity awareness of this green campus.





Students involved in the programme paid visits to farms to interact with the farmers, subject matter specialists and scientific community involved in successful implementation of agricultural hubs to get hands on acquaintance with the practical aspects of organic farming.

"It is pleasing to see the different levels of the growth of a sapling planted by me. I myself watered and nurtured these plants. Through this small step, I am also being a part of the sustainable development of our ecology", says **Vismaya Chandran** of B.Sc. Visual Media batch. There is a parallel mechanism of an active Mathrubhumi SEED unit engaged in organic farming and environmental initiatives in the campus. Our SEED unit was adjudged the best college unit at

District level consecutively for three years. A major outcome of this has been the production of organic vegetables worth Rs. 75,000 during the last year. SEED guides and volunteers made visits to farms, arboretums of medicinal plants, environmental programme and forest expeditions to learn wildlife and inhabitation in forests. They were guided by Wildlife officials and environmentalists. Organic farming for sustainable development is holistic in thinking and practice. The development of the student, both in physical and spiritual level is accomplished through this programme.



Indian Systems of Medicine, Ayurveda for Healthy Life - a synthesis of Karma and Jnana yoga



The course is aimed at creating and maintaining balance in life. It is an ancient system of life (ayur) knowledge (veda) popular in India,

centuries ago. The theory of Ayurveda is evolved from a deep understanding of creation. The great rishis of ancient India came

to understand the secret behind the creation through spiritual practices. The rishis sought to reveal the deepest truths of



human physiology and health. They observed the fundamentals of life, organized them into an elaborate system, and compiled India's philosophical and spiritual texts, called Veda of knowledge. Comprehending the importance of Ayurveda in modern life, the campus provides 'Ayurveda for lifestyle modification' as a discipline through AVP. The lessons on the essential aspects of all systems of medicine of Indian origin supplemented by the detailed discourses on prevention and medication for lifestyle diseases spreading in the country, importance of lifestyle

modification especially through food and daily chorus and even some basic knowledge on first aids in Ayurveda were given to students. About 80 students in the campus took Ayurveda as their AVP course. Br. Dr. Sankara Chaitanya, Medical Director and Dr. James Chacko, Associate Professor from Amrita School of Ayurveda led the classes. Dr. C. Raveendranath Kamath, HOD, Department of Integrated Medicine, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS) also delivered lectures. Students visited the Herbal garden, clinical and surgical facilities and the Ayurvedic

Medicine manufacturing factory at the Amrita School of Ayurveda, Amritapuri. "Ayurveda deals with the discretion to understand good and bad life, happiness and misery and the objectivity of life. In a way we are taught to maintain health in the society, and to prevent disease in order to promote quality of life and long life, more than to heal the sick", says **Dhanyasree** of BBA 2015 batch.



Insights from Ramayana and Mahabharata –a blend of Bhakti and Jnana yoga



The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are not simply the stories of heroism, but they symbolize the socio-religious principles of millions of Indians. They elucidate the ideal way of life

and teaches what life is ought to be. They deal with various aspects of life such as love, duty to superiors, treachery, devotion to parents, the moral and ethical work culture and selflessness.

The course gives an insight to the first Epic in the world (Ramayana) and the largest Epic in the World (Mahabharatha). The profound influence of these epics in Indian culture and values and their relevance in modern times are embedded within the course.

Life is like a game of chess; not merely that, it is like a battlefield. The stories of Rama and Krishna enlighten us the threefold Dharma (code of conduct) pertaining to the individual, the family and the society. The core

objective of the course is to mould students with all the essence of dharma and Indian values. Sri. **S. Hariharan**, an ardent devotee of Amma, with a profound knowledge in Indian tradition, guided the students to learn the essence of life principles through these epics. **Swami Purnamritananda Puri** also conducted interactive sessions with the participants on the practical realization of the essential principles they learned.

“These classes on Ramayana and Mahabharata helped me to comprehend the essence of Indian philosophy and values and a way to live by upholding Dharma”, says **Amrutha** of B.Com.

Temple Mural Arts in Kerala- an Integration of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma Yoga



Mural Painting is an offshoot of the devotional tradition of Kerala. These are the frescos depicting mythology and legends. But in the contemporary scenario, murals are not only confined to the walls and ceilings of the religious institutions but offers a wide vista of opportunity to all artists.

The AVP in Temple and Mural Arts in Kerala aims at learning mural painting through the theory and practice workshops. Sri. **N.K. Vinod** of the department of Visual Media and Communication led the sessions

of the course. Being a professionally trained Mural Artist, he tried to polish the artistic skills of students through a comprehensive and interactive approach. About fifty students from various streams passionately came forward to learn mural painting.

A one day workshop, “**UNMEELANAM**” was also conducted as part of the course by Sri. **K. U. Krishnakumar**, Principal, Guruvayur Dewasom Institute of Mural Painting. The workshop infused lot

of energy and life to the students with enchanting aesthetic vision on Mural Paintings.

“Before joining the Mural painting classes, I was not aware of the ‘science and mathematics’ of art. Every art work attains life only through the precision in size and dimensions. The classes and workshop in mural painting inspired me more to draw”, says **Kavya Pradeep** of Integrated MCA 2015 batch.



Pragmatism in Amma's vision



As a whole AVP enforces the values and tradition, improves artistic skills and provides a holistic personality development for the students. All of us in the campus bow down to the Lotus Feet our beloved **Amma**, our Chancellor and the world renowned spiritual Guru and humanitarian leader for instilling the thought process of

delivering the courses under AVP. Amma's blessings were present and experienced throughout the conduct of the courses offered in these five selected areas. We received excellent feedback from all the participating students, course mentors and even many parents about the course outcome. They were also seemingly energized

with optimism having been able to sensitize a society of youngsters full of renewed spiritual vigour. We feel that we were lucky to be instruments in **Amma's** hands to envision a world reverberating with fullness of sanctity, hope and positive energy.

Opening to The World of Murals

UNMEELANAM

Inspiration often strikes in the most bizarre of ways. "UNMEELANAM", opens up a new vista of traditional mural arts to students. The one-day long workshop lead by **Sri. K.U. Krishnakumar**, Principal of Guruvayur Dewasom Institute of Mural Painting, gave little art lovers a novel vision on Mural Paintings.

Beginning his session with the history of Mural Arts in India, **Sri. K.U. Krishnakumar** pointed out the hard work and dedication needed for the practice of the art form. "Mural paintings are not bloomed over a night. It is an outcome of contemplation of several years. A dedicated artist can only bring out a moving mural painting". He also pointed out the steps needed for the preservation of traditional mural paintings in temple walls of Kerala. It can be conserved only through long exposure to nature.

More than hundred students interested in Mural Painting attended the session. The workshop comprised sessions on "Basic Concepts of Mural Painting" and "Traditional Mural Painting in Temple Art.



The highlight of the workshop was the "Hands on Training" given to the students. The active participation of the students made the workshop a success.

Swami Purnamritananda Puri, General Secretary, Mata Amritanandamayi Math, blessed the ceremony. "Painting is a form of meditation. Hence, artists can perceive an object with a different vision", said Swamiji. Dr. U. Krishnakumar, Prof. C.S. Jayaraman, and D. Harikrishnan, HOD, Department of Visual Media were present on the occasion.



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