

## Best Practice

(i)

**Title of the Practice:** Educational Tour to School of Agricultural Sciences and Rural Development (SASRD) and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to create awareness on locally relevant types of farming practices.

### Objectives of Practice:

To help student teachers:

1. To create awareness on the various forms of farming and see how Science is applied for human welfare.
2. Know the scientific facts and principles involved in various types of farming which are locally relevant.
3. Understand the use of various tools and equipments in farming.
4. Learn the appropriate use and preparation of food for animals, use of pesticides, and other medicines for maintenance of health of farm animals and horticultural crops.
5. Guide school children opt for career selection in agro-based farming.
6. Develop interest in farming as a hobby.

### The context:

Nagaland is a non-industrial state. Therefore, there is a need for focussing on locally relevant small scale industries and domestic farming. The unemployment problem becomes more serious every passing year but people are yet to realize that one could do farming successfully and become self-employed and earn their livelihood. Although many student teachers had a faint idea of how poultry, piggery or any other horticultural crops are raised, they expressed inadequacy of knowledge in many areas of farming. They, especially the in- service teachers were also not fully equipped to guide children in various types of farming. The production of bio-fertilizers, maintenance of nurseries, disease management, identification of suitable crops for growing in the environmental conditions of the state, the technicalities involved in rearing of farm animals etc. were some of the areas where the student teachers lacked knowledge. This called for an educational tour for up-gradation of knowledge in the areas.

### The practice:

For many years the college, through financial help from Department of Higher Education arranged excursions to various parts of India. However, it was realized that local educational tours (An educational tour to North –East Agri Expo in 2006 being one of them) to relevant destinations on relevant themes would be more beneficial to the student teachers to enable them to apply their knowledge in day to day life, guide the community to increase productivity as well as the school children in choosing a career.

In Indian education system it is often found that courses offered lack relevance and utility to learners in different contexts. Such field based activities will help connect content with relevant practices and make education locally viable. Therefore, such a practice in teacher education curriculum provides for opportunities to gain awareness among student teachers on state/local relevant farming practices.

The biggest problem in continuing with the practice is the financial source. The institution being a government run college depends on the financial assistance from the concerned department. Thus, timeliness to certain events is missed out while waiting for the release of money from the department. The trip to the University Departments in the School of Agriculture and Indian Council Agricultural Research greatly impressed the student teachers and they expressed that it would encourage the young people to take up such courses. As far as possible all the practice fields such as *rabbit rearing farm, piggery, poultry, cashew plantation, passion fruit, rubber plantation*, and other aspects such *rain gauge, barometer, vermi compost, wind direction gadgets were seen*.

However, the number of student teachers being close to 100 formed a crowd whenever explanation on different aspects of farming was delivered.

**Evidence of success:**

The success of the tour was evident from the attendance of the student teachers. All except one or two could not join on health grounds. The enthusiasm shown by the student teachers while visiting the different sites of farming noting down points was one indicator while wanting to try out certain operations such as Vermi compost, feeding of animals themselves with the guidance of the professor in-charge was another. The activity of the post tour was types of farming-wise discussion and report writing in group. At this stage, the student teachers were given freedom to choose the area they wanted to work on.

**Problems encountered and Resources required:**

Arrangement for transportation of the whole group was difficult as the college was looking for the cheapest mode of transport. To spare 3 buses to the college by the Department of transport on a working day was difficult but understanding the need and importance of the trip, arrangement could be made.

The group being large, it was difficult to accommodate all in a particular unit leading to management problem.

Learning about so many different farming methods at a time may be confusing specially so when scientific/ technical terms are involved. Therefore, it will be more worthwhile if only a few selected type of farming is taken up based on the interest of the students and educational tours conducted for different groups at different timings. For regular conduct of such tours a regular allotment of fund is necessary.

The number of days for such a programme should also be enhanced.

**Notes:**

Similar activities may be taken up by the other institutions linking it with career guidance programmes.