

## BEST PRACTICES II

### Title of the Practice

## Preserving Heritage: Integrating Traditional Knowledge and Practices in Modern Education

### Objectives of the Practice

The primary objective is to preserve and promote Tamil Nadu's rich cultural heritage by integrating traditional knowledge and practices into modern education. The intended outcomes are to:

- Foster appreciation for Tamil culture and traditions among students.
- Encourage holistic development by combining academic learning with cultural education.
- Promote community engagement and social responsibility.
- Preserve traditional arts, crafts, and practices for future generations.

### The Context

Ganesar College of Arts and Science, founded in 1909 by Vallal V.PL.S. Palaniappa Chettiar and V.PL.S. Annamalai Chettiar, is located in the culturally rich region of Melasivapuri near Parambu-Nadu (Pranmalai). The college addresses several challenging issues:

- Preserving cultural heritage in an increasingly globalized world.
- Ensuring students appreciate their cultural roots while receiving a modern education.
- Engaging the local community in educational and cultural initiatives to promote social cohesion and continuity.

### The Practice

Ganesar College of Arts and Science employs a multifaceted approach to integrate traditional knowledge and practices into its educational framework.

#### *Museum of Cultural Artifacts*

The college maintains a Museum of Cultural Artifacts that offers a captivating glimpse into Tamil heritage, particularly Chettinad traditions. Recognized as a UNESCO landmark, Chettinad is celebrated for its unique arts, crafts, and cultural practices, meticulously preserved and showcased in the museum. The museum serves as an educational hub, providing a tangible connection to Tamil history and cultural practices. Its collection includes intricate wood carvings, silver embellishments, woven saris, and traditional kitchen tools, offering insight into Chettinad's artistic heritage and culinary traditions. The museum features rotating exhibits and an annual exclusive exhibition of valuable artifacts, enhancing learning through educational programs and guided tours.

#### *Traditional Festivals and Celebrations*

The college celebrates festivals like Vinayagar Chaturthi, Saraswathi Puja, Ayudha Puja, and Pongal festivals. These events include traditional

activities such as Silambam (martial arts), Rangoli competitions, and music and dance performances, fostering cultural pride and community.

#### ***Physical Activities and Gender Equality***

The college promotes physical activities such as lifting the Ilavatta Kal (Groom Stone) and teaching Silambam to all students, including women. These practices preserve traditional martial arts, promote fitness, and empower students.

#### **Evidence of Success**

The success of these practices is evidenced by:

- ✚ High level student participation in cultural festivals and community service projects.
- ✚ Positive feedback from students and the local community on the cultural and educational initiatives.
- ✚ Successful completion of the mandatory Tamil language course by all students, ensuring language proficiency.
- ✚ Increased awareness and participation in health and social campaigns, resulting in better community health and reduced school dropout rates.

#### **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

Challenges encountered include:

- ✚ Limited financial resources for maintaining the museum and organizing cultural events.
- ✚ Balancing the traditional curriculum with modern educational demands.
- ✚ Ensuring active participation from students and the community.
- ✚ Resources required:
  - ✚ Financial support for museum upkeep, cultural events, and community projects.
  - ✚ Training for faculty and students in traditional arts and cultural practices.
  - ✚ Technological resources for online educational initiatives.

#### **Additional Information**

Ganesar College of Arts and Science exemplifies how education can be a powerful tool for cultural preservation, community engagement, and holistic development. The college's approach integrates traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and modern education, ensuring students develop a strong connection to their heritage while preparing for contemporary challenges. Through offline and online initiatives, the college promotes cultural awareness, social responsibility, and personal growth among its students.