

## KSHEC Report on

# Earn While You Learn Scheme

Earn While You Learn is an extremely beneficial Scheme in the state. This is a quick appraisal of the Scheme and some practical recommendations based on the country's related schemes and experiences thereof. A detailed plan of implementation has to be worked in consultation with the vice Chancellors of the universities in the state.

### **The Scheme**

'Earn and Learn' Scheme has been implemented worldwide. In our country, UGC's EWYL Programme was announced in 2004 as part of the comprehensive scheme for universities with potential with excellence. Over 100 students doing postgraduate courses, who are financially backward assist various offices and technical work in Madras Universtiy along with their studies.. This scheme is operative in 4 other universities in the country. The process of identifying 10 more universities for focused support under this scheme is on.

The scheme has been in operation in the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India since 2012, providing part-time employment to an enrolled student in a college or university, enabling her/him earn to pay educational expenses. It is available to undergraduate and graduate students willing to work as trainees in tourism sensitizing enterprises ,with aspirations of employment in the sector. An aspirant trainee is estimated to be earning over the tenure of the course duration an amount between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 1,00,000.

### **AICTE and EWYL**

All India Council for Technical Education and All India Technical and Management Council (AITMC) had announced the launch of Earn while Learn scheme in 2017. Under this scheme AITMC will collaborate with industries and business owners to educate and develop the skillset of over 1.5 million youth across industries and provide them assured livelihood. The scheme supports government of India's vision of developing a strong and sustainable economy by enhancing employable skills among the youth

### **Haryana Government and EWYL Scheme**

The Higher Education Department of Haryana has introduced this type of scheme from 2001 onwards for Govt. and Aided Private Colleges. Under the scheme the students could be engaged by the polytechnics for jobs in the following areas: I. I. Laboratories II. Library III. Office

In the labs/ workshops the students can be engaged for making them responsible for handling the equipment/ machinery, its maintenance and upkeep, storage of equipment and upkeep of

Laboratories/ Workshops. Senior students shall be employed for conduct of practical and jobs training in the Workshops. Similarly , the students under this scheme would be engaged for library jobs such as cataloguing, arrangement and display of books, repair of damaged books, issue and return of books etc. Presently the libraries are under staffed and due to this , proper utilization of library is not achieved by the students and the staff. The payment of students under the scheme would be met out from funds such as wages student fund etc. available with the institution. (Details given as Annexure I)

### **Models of EWYL scheme**

Experiences elsewhere suggest that there are three models:

1. Internships, Cooperative Education, and Apprenticeships. Internships inherently self-supporting need no financial support.
2. Cooperative Education provides financial support but is less flexible. It necessitates changing the time schedule of the colleges/universities for enabling students to earn through part-time jobs.
3. Apprenticeship model usually associated with a labor or union-related job in a specific industry, hence not scalable as a general model though scores high in most evaluation categories, is not as widely feasible as Cooperative education and Internships.

### **EWYL: The Proposed Scheme**

The proposed Scheme is an adapted version of Cooperative Education with select features of Internships and Apprenticeships. Possibilities and details thereof have to be explored and worked out. Indeed, it is at the right time, the Government of Kerala has thought about launching the Scheme, which can go a long way as a very significant means to help the students work and support their education on the one side and acquire skills guaranteeing employability on the other. It at once mitigates economic hardships of learning and enhances the adaptable efficiency of the learner. Both will improve the quality of education and make it a purposeful endeavour.

**EWYL Scheme** has to be conceived mainly in two dimensions: One is the planned and organized; and the other, self-driven. In the planned and organized dimension the Government, Government Colleges, Universities and semi-Government establishments play the key role. They plan, organize and implement the scheme.

In the Self-driven dimension, it is students' personal choice under the flexible rules and regulations provided by the Government, Government Colleges, Universities and semi-Government establishments, which matters. Students themselves due to economic and social constraints take to means of earning along with learning.

### **Professional Programmes and EWYL Scheme**

There has been a steady increase in the number of students in the under- graduate and post-graduate levels in recent times. This is much more so in the case of colleges for professional education like teachers' training and engineering institutions. Engineering colleges proliferate engineering graduates and postgraduates, but not engineers. They do not come out as ready to work professionals. This predicament of

poor employability can be addressed to a great extent through the Scheme. Medical Colleges constitute the only exception to the situation, for the medical graduates/postgraduates come out as ready to work professionals. It is rendered plausible through the method of learning medicine by treating the patients.

Engineering students are not made to learn by doing, despite the Washington Accord and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) measures for enforcing Outcome Based Education. **EWYL** can become a turning point in our engineering education. Employers want to recruit qualified but ready to work candidates. Such candidates are very few. **EWYL** Scheme is a solution to the predicament.

### **Benefits of the Scheme**

Giving the students an opportunity to acquire work experience while learning is extremely important. There is no doubt that it can provide skills of employability and strengthen students' preparedness to find successful careers.

There are many benefits for **EWYL** Scheme. Most important is mitigation of economically backward students' hardships in education due to income shortage, inculcation of dignity of labour including values of hard work among students, enhancement of skills adding to employability, strengthening of resourcefulness to take up better jobs in the future, development of personal interest and preference in the fields of learning, reduction of the sense of alienation in the students' minds about what they learn, and transformation of higher education into a self-directed, personal, and life-related enterprise, not always curiosity driven though.

What earnings the students make can provide motivation for learning and successfully complete their academic programmes. Students draw insight into the world of work, know career prospects, acquire job skills, develop interpersonal relations, and cultivate social skills, enhance employment prospects, increase industrial contacts, improve self-confidence, job knowledge, job-seeking skills, attitudes towards practical reasoning, develop greater maturity, and demonstrate competencies.

### **Academic Performance and EWYL Scheme**

Nevertheless, it is important to make detailed assessment of the earn – learn relationship examining the impact of work on the students' academic performance and vice versa besides how the process has been decisive about the students' career preference, show that the concept of earning and learning should take into account with great caution. It is important to take seriously the reasons for the students to turn to earning along with learning, the impact of earning on academic performance, the relation between economic status of students and their engagement in earning activities, and the relation between the part-time job undertaken and the future employability.

For a state like Kerala that gives importance to social security through education through equity, access and scholarships, how earning affects learning must be a serious point of attention. We should not forget the fact that in the developed

capitalist countries this scheme is meant to encourage the Government to withdraw from the financial assistance to the poor students. It is a fact that the Scheme gives the employers a good opportunity to influence curriculum design and content, so as to reduce recruitment and training costs.

Despite all the rhetoric, the painful truth about the earning component is financial stress. No doubt that learn and work is important in today's context of increasingly competitive employment demanding high skill adaptability and efficiency. How the poor students constrained to do low-income, under-skilled part-time jobs to earn for learning can help them gain better jobs is a disturbing question. It is important to ensure their career prospects through educational planning.

### **Higher Education Scenario in Kerala**

There are 13 state universities functioning in Kerala. Of this, 4 universities mainly Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi, Calicut and Kannur are general in nature and are affiliating universities. There are 229 Arts and Science colleges in the state comprising of 163 private aided colleges and 66 government colleges. Apart from these, various self financing Arts and Science colleges are also functioning in the state. The total number of students enrolled in various Arts and Science colleges excluding unaided colleges under the 4 general universities in Kerala in 2018-19 is 3.28 lakh. Of this 2.2 Lakh (68%) are girls. The number of teachers in Arts and Science colleges in the state in 2018-19 was 10,145 out of whom 56.6% constitutes women. There are nearly 405 Arts and Science colleges in the self financing sector. There are 179 Engineering colleges in the state with sanctioned intake of 51764 in 2019. Out of these Engineering colleges 167 are self financing colleges 9 are government colleges and 3 are private aided colleges. Hence the potential for the implementation of the EWYL scheme is very high provided that there is proper planning, funding and co-ordination by government and universities.

### **Measures to be adopted by the Government/ Universities/ Colleges**

EWYL Scheme would be sustainable only if necessary procedures are in place to ensure accountability from the part of educational institutions as well as industries. The Scheme will be effective and sustainable as a transforming initiative only if the Universities and Colleges provide for flexibility and choice in their governance, which should attract and retain students by providing them adequate environment to acquire professional skills to take up temporary jobs to earn while they learn.

- **EWYL** has to ensure the flexibility that the students need for acquiring knowledge and skills essential to earn a living. It is essential to specifically address the issue from the perspective of the student benefit and educational quality.
- Basic principles have to be laid, specific activities have to be drawn, guidelines have to be prepared, flexible governance has to be guaranteed.
- AICTE with an objective to offer on-the-job practical training to enhance employability has made a Regulation called "National Employability Enhancement Mission"(NEEM) Regulations 2013, vide Gazette Notification

dated 15th April 2013 of AICTE. Universities and Colleges should be able to adopt/adapt the regulations thereof.

- Universities and colleges have to design career-oriented supplementary courses, and recognize work experience as part of academic assessment. It is necessary to teach students the work ethics and communication skills.
- Career-oriented curriculum models in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) have to be prepared providing academically rigorous and relevant training.
- There should be academic efforts to improve the competency in the work as well. Students have to be enabled to practice in human relations, skills, self-reliance, self-confidence, and responsibility.
- Industry and university partnerships Government and nongovernment agencies provide guidance in the development and administration of the Scheme.
- We have to make sure greater collaboration between the two without compromising the ultimate goals and objectives of the scheme.
- The Scheme will have difficulties in the set up, where the Industry – university partnership is in its infancy.
- The business community and education institutions should ensure mutual agreement on goals and objectives.
- Similarly, educational institutions should not see the Scheme as an opportunity to exploit for institutional profit.
- Education institutions with the help of their departments of economics, commerce and management studies, need to assess the human resource requirement by regularly monitoring the labor market, identifying emerging trends and changing conditions of employment, and respond to market needs by supplementing their academic programmes with necessary skill based courses.
- It is indispensable to secure greater collaboration between employer establishments and higher educational institutions with complete agreement on the basic goals and objectives of the Scheme.
- More money is needed to attract and retain students. Current funding is insufficient for running the Scheme of enabling students to earn a living while they learn.
- Government will have to provide financial support for the successful working of the scheme. Government will have to set apart enough money to attract and retain students in the scheme, ensuring that students earn a living wage while they study.

### **Timing of HEIs/ colleges and Earn and Learn Scheme**

For the successful implementation of Earn and Learn scheme the present timing of our universities and colleges should be suitably modified. At present as per government order (GO RT No. 178/2015 HEDN dated 29/01/2015) “the college are directed to insist on a minimum physical presence of teachers for 6 hours in the colleges excluding the one hour lunch recess; depending upon hte local conditions, the colleges will have a working hour pattern of 9 am to 4 pm or 9.30 am to 4.30 pm or 10 am to 5 pm. Each college should intimate the timing chosen by it to the concerned university and Government.”

This timing may be suitably modified with working hours commencing from 8.00 am. with due allowance for the regional or local transportation and other constraints.

### **The split vacation & EWYL Scheme**

If the proposed change in college timing is changed as suggested above colleges can lessen some of the problems in the credit semester system. The major problem is maximisation of working days in a semester. Colleges are closed on for conducting centralised valuation camps which curtails the mandatory 90 working days in a semester. Hence along with change in the timing of colleges for EWYL scheme, split vacation pattern should also be introduced in universities/ colleges. Split vacation (November and May) can improve the efficiency of the CBCSS as it has several administrative and academic advantages over the annual pattern (April – May) of vacation which is/ was evident in the case of Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady/ Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. Such an arrangement would give freedom to students to take up parttime iemployment in the afternoons when they will be free .

### **KSHEC’s Role / Suggestions**

Our considered opinion is that the scheme should be based on an innovative and sustainable model, which can address current needs of students, both their knowledge base as well as skill or efficiency adaptable to changing conditions. It should never be a one-size-fits-all model. We should be able to evolve a model that meets the needs of students, society, and the industry.

- In order to achieve this, the Council can evolve in collaboration with universities and autonomous colleges a feasible set of measures for the effective implementation of the Scheme.
- KSHEC can provide guidance for the success of the Scheme by helping the students acquire quality knowledge and adaptable skills to work better as the employers need, guiding education institutions, and advising government/ autonomous agencies to collaborate.
- It can make the institutional commitment to the Scheme as a criterion for assessment and accreditation. Universities and Colleges can be told that their

commitment to train students for professional/occupational careers shall be counted as an added merit.

- It can include the importance of the Scheme as a component in its accreditation and pre-accreditation awareness services.

### **Safeguards for EWYL**

- There is need for strict monitoring by government/ university in the implementation of Earn and Learn scheme in universities and colleges.
- The infrastructural and other facilities in all higher education institutions in the afternoon session should be utilised for the maximisation of the objectives of this scheme.
- For this new short term employment oriented courses with emphasis on skill development should be offered in these institutions instead of keeping the facilities idle. This may further enhance the employment opportunities of the students.
- Models that the industries blow up for publicity cannot help the scheme. Often various industries make offers of part-time jobs, but with little or no genuine interest in effectively integrating their part-time jobs with the Scheme's overall goal of combining social security and quality of education with equity, access, continuity, and employable competency, gave precedence to their profit.
- Industries should see it as part of their corporate social responsibility to employ and train students under the EWYL Scheme on a flexible part time arrangement .

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