



ACPR Newsletter

Issue – 1

January 2021

Annual



Vision

Research and Training for
Peer Learning and Policy
Support

Mission

- Facilitating Horizontal Learning among Farmers
- Training in Learning Content Management to Development Personnel
- Establishing data base
- Academic support for Research and Policy Formulation



ARRUPE CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH (ACPR)

Arul Anandar College (Autonomous), Karumathur – 625 514, Madurai District, Tamil Nadu

The Evolution of ACPR

Arul Anandar College is conceived as a forerunner of rural higher education in the context of its organic relationship with the communities in the neighborhood villages. Despite the college had significant academic achievements, it did not have a mechanism to collect, maintain and exchange the data relevant to rural communities in its target villages. Keeping this in mind, the college initiated a data centre called Rural Resource Data Archive (RRDA) with a very modest

financial support from Stitching Porticus of Netherlands for establishing the proposed data centre. The centre collected household information of the entire Chellampatti Panchayat Union, information on infrastructure such as educational institutions, financial institutions, and other government institutions and documented them.

Realizing the need for making the available data useful by promoting development research

Salient Features

- Partnership with Commonwealth of Learning, Canada
- Britto Agro Informatic Centre
- Carrier Oriented Course (COC) on Multimedia for Lifelong Learning and Open and Distance Learning
- Database Support for Researchers
- Publications
- Production of e- Materials for farmers

Contact Us

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<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010028025889>

this centre has been officially rechristened as Arrupe Centre for Policy Research (ACPR) in later years. Noting the vibrancy of ACPR, the college motivated this unit to move further and help people in every possible manner. Hence, ACPR undertook the process of helping the people to prepare development project by organizing Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

In order to inculcate a sense of commitment among the panchayat leaders ACPR organized a one-day training to all the elected panchayat leaders of Chellampatti Panchayat Union. The development programmes of ACPR experienced a facelift when it entered into an Agreement with Commonwealth of Learning in the year 2007.

In partnership with COL the centre established the Britto Agro Informatic Centre, organized Vaigai Vivasagal Nala Sangam and established collaboration with other partners such as VIDIYAL in Theni District, RSGA at Reddiyar Chathram. The potentialities of this unit were tapped by NISG for a UN sponsored software development project and

ACPR successfully completed all its agreed responsibilities. Besides, ACPR rendered its support to the Indian Overseas Bank to establish information integrated touch screen computer systems at Theni and other locations. The volume of knowledge content in the form of voice mails and other documents developed by ACPR is very high and its services are much helpful in the livelihood support system of the poor in the villages.

As agreed upon with COL the ACPR is regularly conducting a Career Oriented Course (COC) on Multimedia for Lifelong Learning and ODL which is helpful to many students to gain employment opportunities. Participation in academic programme is also demonstrated by a National Seminar jointly organized by the Department of Rural Development Science and the Department of Computer Science in 2019. ACPR facilitated the signing of Memorandum of Understanding with the NAMUR university, research assistance to the research scholars of NAMUR university.

This unit also facilitated the student visitors of NAMUR University to have educational exposure in Madurai. All these go to show that ACPR is an integral component of the college in promoting academic, research and extension programmes.

Director's Message



Rev. Dr. U. Godwin Rufus, SJ
Principal & Director - ACPR

Information is the essence of progress and knowledge. When information comes from authentic persons, they not only create ripples in the hearts and minds of people but they stir them towards action.

The farmers' protest in the last two months near Delhi has drawn the attention not only of the nation but also of the international community. This conflict revolves around the policy of the Government. We hope that this conflict is resolved justly & peacefully.

The Arrupe Centre for Policy Research of Arul Anandar College has been actively working in the interest of the farmers. I am glad that this centre is launching a news bulletin for

the first time. This is a timely effort by the centre to disseminate relevant information to interested public so that everyone joins in working for the welfare and progress of the farmers.

My best wishes for ACPR and its team to continue the grand work of disseminating knowledge to the least and the last.

Special Article



Rev. Dr. S. Lazar, SJ
Executive Director, ACPR

“The Farmers’ Protest on the Borders of Delhi - Some Comments”

A historical moment in India

The Farmers' Protest on the borders of New Delhi demanding the repeal of the three Farm Laws is making a deep imprint on the history of the Indian subcontinent. Their sheer number that goes into lakhs, their resolve to stay in protest for more than 50 days despite the biting cold, the sense of community that prevails at the protest sites expressing itself in the community kitchen managed with maximum participation of the farmers, and above all, their determination to adhere to

protest very unique in the history of India. Even the violence witnessed during the tractor rally on the Republic day has been condemned by the main Farmers unions.

On the other hand, the central government is in the woods and is groping its way to come out of the situation. It has held a series of talks with the leaders of the farmers' unions, that have not been successful. It referred the matter to the Supreme Court which is viewed by many as a step to bring a legal control on the protesting farmers. The intervention of the Supreme court in the line of appointing an 'expert' committee has been widely criticized and the farmers rejected the committee on the ground that the committee members are known supporters of the farm laws. They also refused to accept the Supreme Court's promise of staying the implementation of these laws for the time being. The many rounds of talks that the Union Agriculture Minister held with the protest leaders, offering a few concessions that includes holding back the laws for 18 months, have not resulted in the withdrawal of the protest. No other protest movements in the recent past resisted pressures of these kind. Huge uncertainty prevails as far as these three

contentious Laws are concerned and the resistance they have evoked. How will this issue be resolved? – a question in everyone's mind. In this context, the basic arguments of both the government and the farmers need to be examined.

The claims and arguments of the government in a nutshell

These three Farm Laws will increase the income of the farmers as they have now the opportunity to increase their production with investments from private sector and sell their produce at much higher prices. Presently the farmers lack the much-needed financial resources to meet the input costs and the production is low and the prices are controlled as their produce are sold at the government Procuring Centers as per the pre-fixed minimum support prices. The advantage in price fluctuations in the market is enjoyed by the traders- the so-called middle men. This is viewed as exploitation and these three laws are supposed to free the farmers from the local traders.

The claims and arguments of the protesting farmers in a nutshell

The market is not an innocent invisible player. It comes in the form of corporate houses operated by men and their money power. They will, of course, eliminate the local

by quoting much higher prices initially for the farmers' produce. Subsequently, the corporates will exercise enormous control to fix the prices as low as they want. In addition, by offering to meet the input cost to the farmers as advance, the corporates can reject the goods on grounds of poor quality and demand the return of the input cost received from them as advance. If the farmers cannot return the money, they will lose their land permanently. The ultimate outcome will be a situation wherein the farmers sell their goods at prices much lower than what they were receiving from the government procuring centres and other local private traders. If they don't take that option, they will lose their land permanently to the corporates making way for corporate farming which requires hundreds of acres of land in one piece.

Clash between corporate farming and traditional farming

The main arguments of the government and the farmers indicate that the present situation in Delhi can be described as a clash between Corporate Farming and Traditional Farming. Corporate farming aims at wider market including the international market and limitless profit. Land is viewed as just a means of production. Whereas, the traditional farming views and as nature's gift to be respectfully

used for sustenance of humanity, and market is a means to ensure sustenance for people at an affordable cost.

Making profit is subservient to the goal of providing food for people in the immediate neighbourhood and beyond.

Time to take an option

The confrontation between the government and the farmers today is a confrontation between the traditional farming and corporates in farming business. The choice of the government is clear and it is definitely in favour of turning the traditional farming into corporate farming with twin objectives viz. favouring the profit-making enterprises of the corporate houses and strengthening the government exchequer.

In this scheme of things, the farming classes- the large, middle and small - will be dispossessed of their lands in course of time. The landless who survive on these lands as labourers also will be dispossessed of their livelihoods due to the deployment of modern technology in all agricultural operations by the corporate houses. Need for human labour will be reduced to the minimum. It is to be noted that nearly 70 per cent of the Indian population is dependent on agriculture, unlike the developed countries where only a fraction of the population is engaged in farming. What are

the alternative avenues for the displaced farmers and farm labour class? The government that so resolutely refuses to repeal the farm laws does not seem to address these concerns. In its narrative, it does not mention the possible displacement of people and alternative means of livelihood. It has no thought on the extensive changes these laws will bring in the countryside in terms of social costs and has not proposed any plans for restructuring the lives of people in the countryside. A government in a democracy cannot be oblivious of these changes as the result of its policy measures. The civil society in India is forced to make an enlightened choice. The promise of development that our present leaders propagate is development of a few. The majority, by losing their farm land, will lose not only their livelihood but also their traditional habitat, their cultural inheritance with no alternative better than the present mode of living. It is common to observe certain enthusiasm among the educated, urban Indians to embrace the economic rationality that these three farm laws carry. Driven by the idea of nationalism and development in the model of developed nations, they claim that these laws are beneficial to the majority of the farmers. This section of people must pause to reflect on the implications of these laws not only in terms of the market expansion and

profit it may generate, but also on the massive displacement of labour due to loss of land and the habitat of millions of people. The section of people must worry about the silence of the government on the future of the farmers along these lines and expect it not to abdicate this responsibility. In the light of the above arguments, the civil society is forced to make a choice whether it needs mere economic progress benefitting a few or protection of millions of people in the rural area.

What is the stand of other states including Tamil Nadu?

Finally, one sees a need for the farming communities in states other than Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh to express their stand on these pressing questions discussed above. Tamil Nadu, as an example, needs to be alert and see the implications these laws have on Tamil Nadu farmers. There are two reasons for this seeming complacency among the farmers in Tamil Nadu. Except for the sporadic protest in a few places, which are largely led by the farmers' unions, Tamil Nadu as a state did not witness the kind of determination found among the farmers of Punjab, Haryana and a few other neighbouring states. It may be because the assertive middle class in the state does not feel about the loss of land and traditional habitat of communities in course of

time. Most in this class is urban, educated and involved in the service and industrial sectors. Farmers do not seem to respond except in isolated pockets where large scale paddy cultivation takes place. Most of the farmers in the state are engaged in dry land farming where they grow cereals, pulses etc. Even the quantum of production is much less than in other parts of India. Both these reasons are flawed in their own way. The sudden disruption in landholding, disintegration of the rural habitat and cultural heritage mediated by corporate farming is a problem to be faced by all classes of people irrespective of the quantum of production taking place there at the moment. That explains why farmers of all classes and castes and ethnicity have converged on the borders of Delhi. The present protest is claimed not only for restoring the Minimum Support Prices but also to protect the land which the protestors call their own, their villages and thus want to ensure a safe and secure future for their children.

The Tamil Nadu farmers should take note that most of their agricultural produce is presently covered by minimum support prices. Though union government has now promised to shelf these laws for 18 months, it is possible that the Union Government may bring in these three farm laws indirectly by saying that only

those who agree to these laws will enjoy the present minimum support prices. The state government will be forced to act in favour of these laws then. This scenario needs to be foreseen by the farmers and their well-wishers and appropriate choice needs to be made.

In conclusion, traditional farmers across the nation should become part of the present struggle to demand the repeal of these three corporate-friendly farm laws. New set of reforms could be placed for more transparent consultation with farmers and their unions. The farmers could continue their agitation till the government is able to offer a new set of reforms that recognize all the rights of the Farmers.

The Concept of Farmer Producer Organisation

Dr. C. Mabel Joshaline & Mr. P. Anthony Raj

Programme Coordinators, ACPR

Farmer is the only category in the economy, who purchases all inputs at retail rate and sells the harvested produce at wholesale rate, thus be the loser at both ends. The Farmer Interest Group (FIG) with 20 farmers in each Farmer Producer Company (FPC) with 50 FIGs platforms reverses this process by effecting collective purchase of inputs at wholesale rate and dispose the

branded and value-added products directly to consumers at retail rates ensuring profitability of farming. The primary purpose of incorporation of FPC with 1000 farmers as shareholders is to procure the produce of the members, clean, grade, add value, store and market direct to consumers with a brand of the Company for better profitability. The collective purchase of inputs for 1000 farmers ensures cost reduction in cultivation. Ultimately, the FPC assumes greater role in the supply chain in lieu of middlemen and ensures the better price for the produce. The Producer Company can undertake any type of agribusiness suited to the region, earn profit and share the profit with shareholder members as dividend. The producer Company would empower FIGs by sharing the part of the business or if FIG can undertake any business, the Producer company extend market support.

The FPC Could undertake joint business for mutual benefit. Since it is a social enterprise, it renders technical, financial, and marketing services to the shareholders through FIG. The density of such FPCs is increasing year after year in swelling figures and are federated into state level apex company within each state; all such state level FPCs across India will be incorporated into National level Producer Company, similar to

Confederation of Indian Industry. Bringing 'corporate culture' into the farmer owned and managed FPOs was the real task; The capability to achieve this transformation should be uniform in all the Farmer Producer Companies (FPOs) of the state irrespective of the sponsor; It is essential to achieve this ideal in all FPOs uniformly and evenly so that such member owned institutions shall become sustainable in managing their business by building the capacity of FPO in terms of governance, administration, budget mobilization, finance control, management and discipline, incorporating value systems and ethics in business.

As a major commitment towards Farmer Producer Organisations ACPR has decided to offer a host of activities to them. It will act as a facilitator between the FPOs in Madurai region.

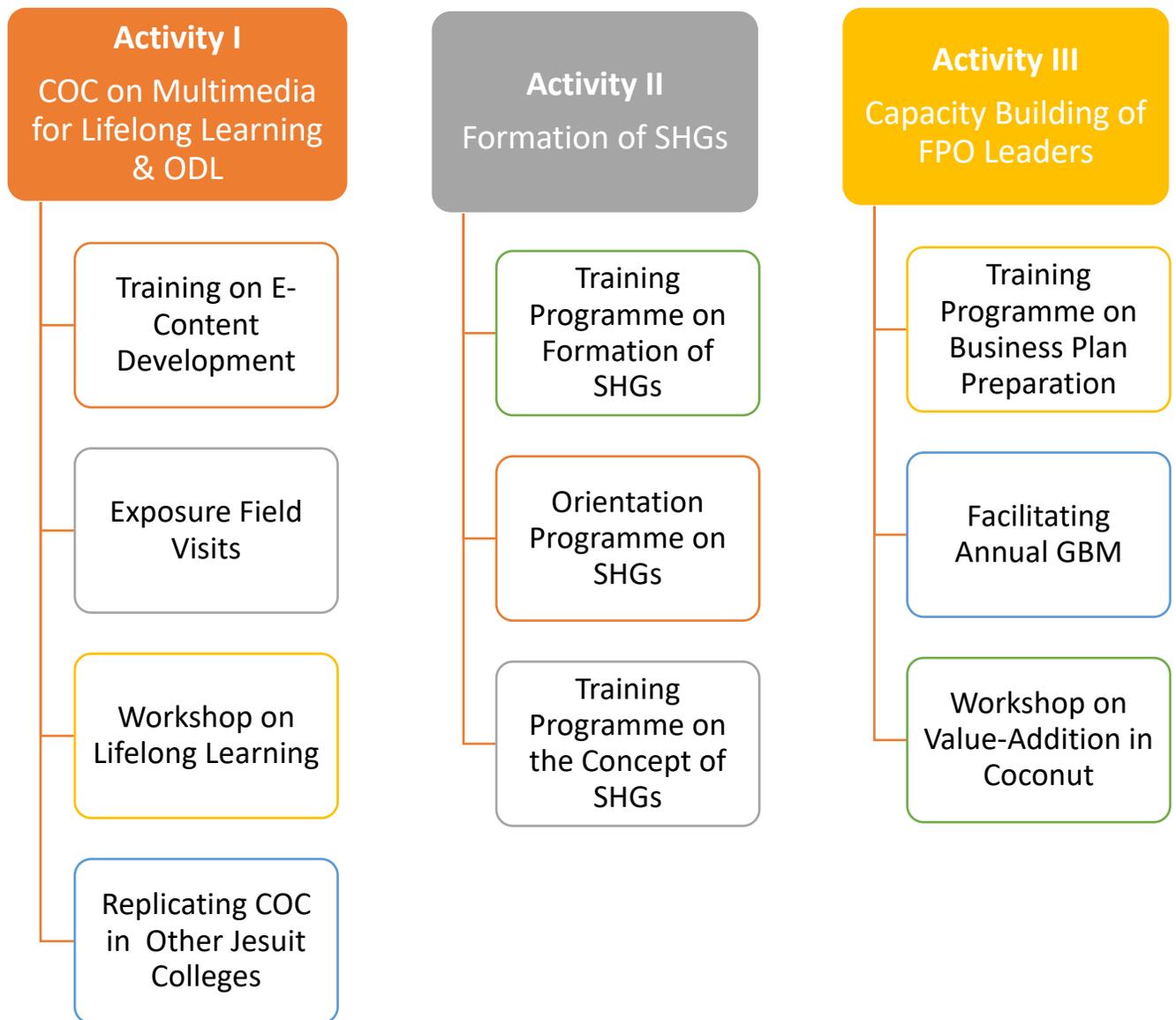
The prime agenda are:

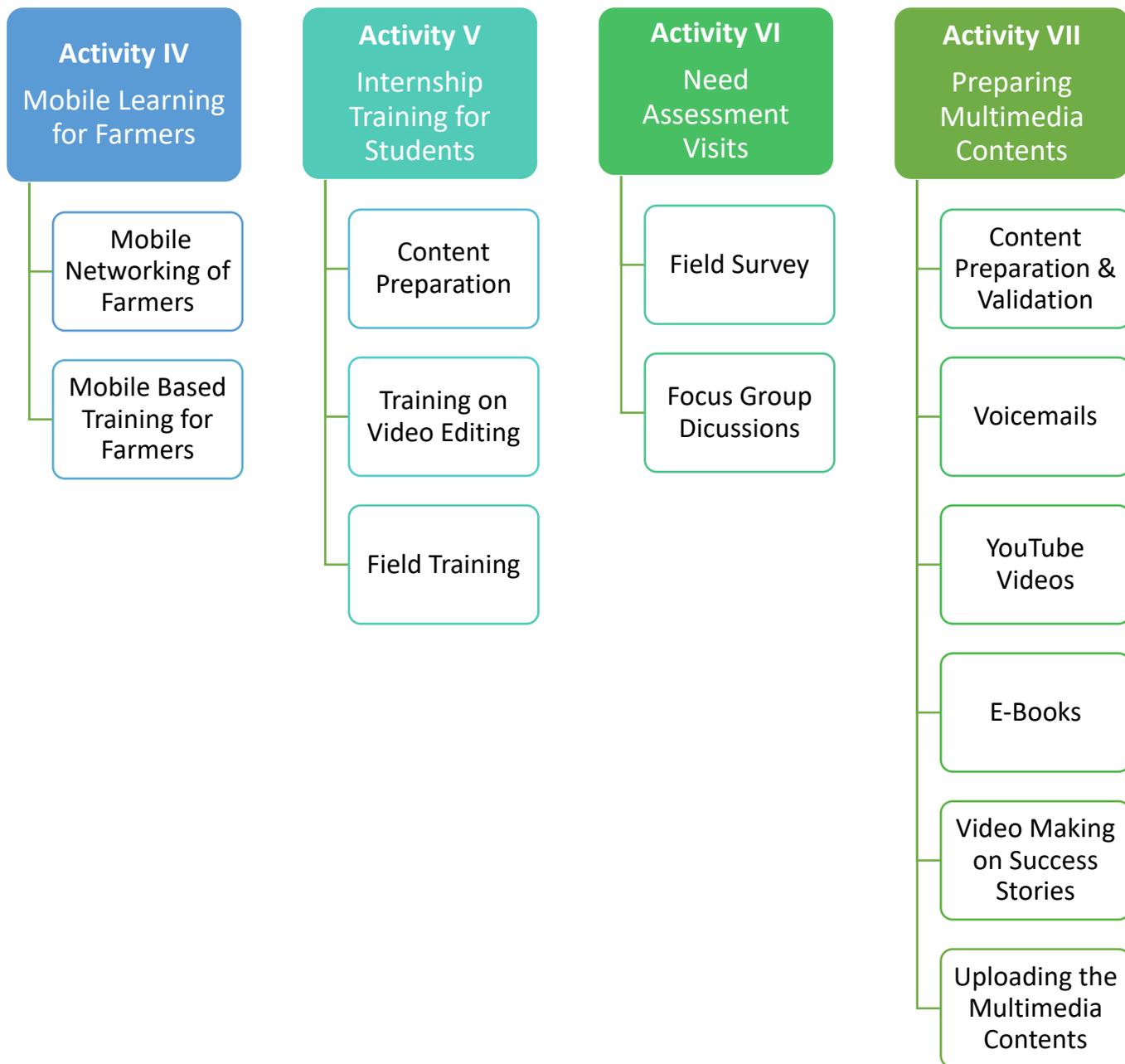
- To sensitize the FPOs to the need for joining the state level FPO for availing better institutional support
- To collect and maintain FPO database for future planning
- To establish linkage with financial institutions and to channelize the credit support to FPOs at various levels

- To provide marketing support to the FPOs by venturing the possible avenues of market expansion through online and off-line links
- To provide critical strategic interventions to accelerate their business by examining their work and business plan

ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMMES

2019 - 2020





Abbreviations

COC - Career Oriented Course

ODL - Open and Distance Learning

SHG - Self-Help Groups

FPO - Farmer Producer Organisation

What is L3F?

- It stands for Lifelong Learning for Farmers
- This idea was initiated by Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada
- It is an approach to facilitate farmers’ learning and mobilize them to involve in agricultural enterprise
- It aims to increase community saving and family income of farming communities

PHOTO GALLERY

1

Training Programme on “Business Plan Preparation” for FPO Leaders in the Office of Deputy Director of Agricultural Marketing, Theni on 21.12.2019



2

A One-Day Workshop on “Lifelong Learning” for Faculty Memembrs of Other Institutions on 11.01.2020



3

Training Programme on “Formation of Self-Help Groups” for the Final Year UG Girl Students of Arul Anandar College on 25.01.2020



4

5 Final Year UG Students of Department of Rural Development Science Completed their '15-Days Internship Training Programme' in ACPR from 13.02.2020 to 29.02.2020



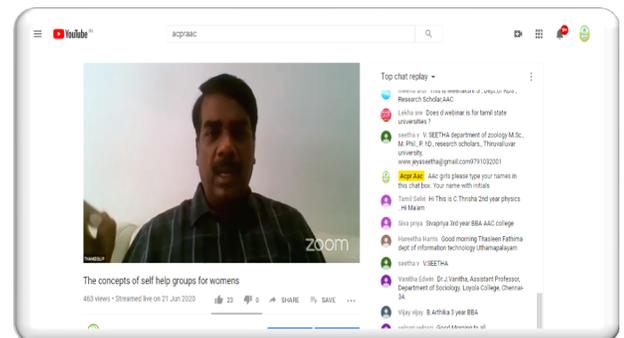
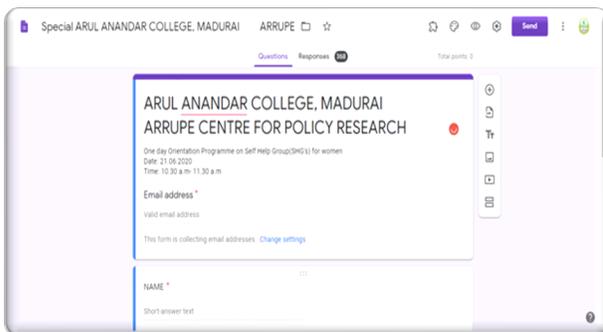
5

A Three - Day Training Programme for FPO Leaders on "Business Plan Preparation" from 19.06.2020 to 21.06.2020



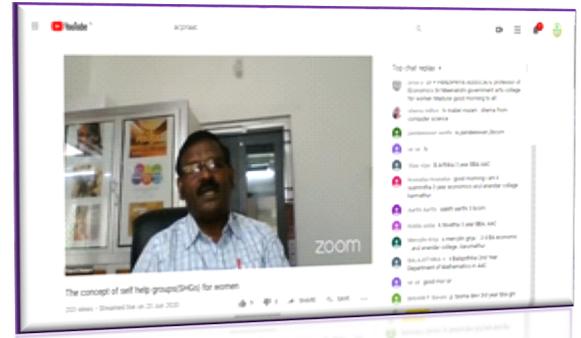
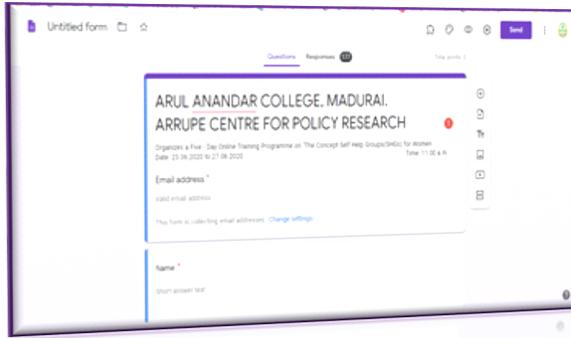
6

Orientation Programme on SHGs for the Final Year UG Girl Students of Arul Anandar College & Students from Other Colleges (Webinar) on 21.06.2020



7

A Five-day Online Training Programme on “The Concept of SHGs” for the Final Year UG Girl Students of Arul Anandar College & Students from Other Colleges from 23.06.2020 to 27.06.2020



8

Mobile Based Training for Farmers on 04.07.2020 & 08.07.2021



9

A 5-Day Workshop on “Value Addition in Coconut” from 07.07.2020 to 11.07.2020



The List of Multimedia Contents Prepared in 2019-20

S.No.	Multimedia Content	Total Numbers
1	Voice Mails	539
2	YouTube Videos	30
3	E-Books	5
4	Documentary Videos on Success Stories	5

Events Organised in 2020-21

Preliminary meeting with FPO leaders was conducted to create a consortium of FPOs on 20.02.2021



An orientation programme on networking of FPOs was organised for FPO leaders and members on



Upcoming Events

- Two-Days Training on Producing and Marketing Coir Pith for FPO Leaders on 05.02.2021 & 06.02.2021
- Training on Vermicomposting and Panchagavya Preparation for FPOs in February 2021
- Mobi-MOOCs for Farmers in February 2021
- Two-Days Skill Training on L3F and Developing Multimedia Contents in March 2021
- Two-Days Workshop on Upscaling of L3F Model in Academic Institutions in March 2021

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