

1. Title of the Practice:

Development of Three Intra-University Independent Museums (Folklore Museum, Department of Folklore and The Fossil Museum, Department of Botany, Museum of Biological Specimens, Department of Zoology) Initiating Collaborations with Other Universities for Sustainable Development

2. Objective of the Practice:

- a. To exhibit the University collections and present to its stakeholders the university history and body of knowledge developed by university personnel.
- b. To dedicate part or the entire facility as a common study area for PG students, PhD research scholars, UG students of colleges affiliated under the University of Kalyani or elsewhere and support class instructors/ teachers as per their request.
- c. Multiplication of Benefits from Collaboration between Universities because of the resources exhibited.
- d. For increasing opportunities for regular interaction and communication among students, teachers and visitors to stimulate ideas and allow projects to “bubble up” from staff, students and faculties engaged in related activities.

3. The Context: Museums are considered as key contributors to new knowledge and research. The context behind building up three independent museums were to provide importance to their teaching and research mission as museums were recognized as essential components of a university of the highest intellectual calibre.

4. The Practice:

- a. **Folklore Museum:** Since the inception of the Department has been trying to develop one folklore museum cum archive, which has now been started in a small room and a good number of items of cultural importance have been collected, documented and displayed. Basically, the department gives emphasis to collect materials which are directly connected with folklife. The mentioned department has collected various masks which are used in folk and tribal dances. The department of Folklore is able to collect various silver ornaments, used by the folks, different specimens of Terracotta, scroll paintings of Midnapore, fishing nets and other materials, Suri bowl of Birbhum, wooden dolls, varied folk tools, Naksi kantha, Kalighat paintings, specimens of conch-shell, craft, Dokra and others, rare collection of folk deities etc. In fact, our museum cum archive is the only museum in the University which is visited by scholars,

researchers, students for academic purposes. Already this museum cum archive has been found mention in a number of books. This museum has also been appreciated by Ms. Helen G La Fave, US Consul General, Kolkata.



b. Museum of Zoological Specimens:

A state of art departmental museum has been established for proper preservation of various zoological specimens which are arranged according to their phyla. The scientific classification of each of the species have been put on the specimens by the PG students of the department. The specimens are procured as per identification syllabus of the department and also collected and preserved during the zoological excursion of the students. These specimens have been collected without destroying the biodiversity of the collection area. All the students of the

department both PG and PhD students work with the specimens in the museum and the students from various UG colleges visit the museum from time to time.



c. Fossil Museum:

The Fossil Museum is founded in Palaeobotany, Palynology and Evolution Section of Botany Department, Kalyani University with exciting and thought-provoking displays of nature's treasure trove. Most of these fossils have been collected since a long time by the faculties of the department for their research interest. Later, these collections were placed together forming the fossil museum of the university. The PG students as well as the research scholars work with the specimens with outmost care and the museum is open to all the departments of the university as well as to the UG college students. The department arranges various extension programmes to the school students and college students where the students visit this museum and faculties in the department share their knowledge on palaeobotany with them.

It is unusually rich for a small museum and there is a lot of interesting stories of natural history to tell for educating the students and common people about study and its significances in our daily life. The museum houses a wide variety of fossils especially belonging to plant kingdom, collected mainly from Gondwana, Siwalik and

Deccan Intertrappean strata of India. Besides, a good collection of plant fossils exhibiting the diversity of Euramarian flora in geological past is showcased to highlight the origin of land plants and their evolution through ages.



- 5. Evidence of Success:** Besides offering regular courses, the museums of the university intend to offer orientation and organize national and international seminar, workshop etc. on folklore and folk life, palaeobotany, Zootaxa, Animal Diversity etc. The University of Kalyani is keen about the academic awareness in inter- provincial and global perspective and for this intends to establish collaboration among different scholars of India and the foreign Universities / Institutes to felicitate an exchange of views between the scholars in inter-disciplinary studies. The University intends to

undertake exchange programmes at different levels for strengthening the museums as well as for generating academic interaction and mutual understanding. The success of the museums has been obtained in the form of various international collaborations and international projects. Department of Zoology is working with University of Uzbekistan where a MoU of 3 years have been generated. Moreover, the exhibits of all the three museums generate a lot of interest amongst students of the university and are generally exhibited to the public on special occasions.

6. **Problems Encountered and resources Required:** The major problem encountered is the costs of maintaining the museums in the university. The university being a non-profit organization allow free entry in the museums and generating income out of these museums is not possible. So, maintaining the exhibits with proper care is the main challenge that the university faces. Moreover, the tropical weather conditions are not very conducive for preserving different items collected by the departments. But the departments, with their faculty strength try to maintain all the facilities.

The main resource required is a resource person/ museologist who would maintain all the three museums as state of art facility of the University of Kalyani, work towards the development of the museums and bring state and central fundings for proper upkeeping of the three museums.

7. **Notes (Optional):**