

## **Volunteerism as an Approach to Achieve Success – A Case Study Of Akyutha 2k16**

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### **Abstract**

Volunteerism is a term very often used for community service but it also has other meaning like it is a policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talents for charitable, educational or other worthwhile activities. Its importance in educational arena is realised by not utilized to its fullest. It has to be seen from teaching various aspects like team building, empowerment, student engagement, skill enhancement etc., The present Case Study will help faculties of any subject realise the importance of volunteerism as an element to teach various aspects like mentioned above and achieve success accordingly.

### **History**

It all started in 2013, Akyutha – The Journey of Knowledge- was the name finally given after a long brain storming session by students and faculties of Department of Business Studies. The name was given for the Management Event/Fest. Although Management Fest by Management departments is no new news but this was special as it was first of its kind as the university and the department were only 3 year old. The students of MBA III semester were all set and determined to give it a try in terms of organizing the event at district level. They started working on all the things required for it, from sponsorship to forming committees to framing events (HR, Marketing, Finance, etc.,) under the guidance of faculties, and what not. There was a point where the Head of the Department felt it would be risking the reputation

of the department if failed and few faculties were of similar opinion, but there were few faculties who believed in the capacity of their students and had an discussion with other colleagues and convinced them of its success if planned and guided properly (refer to case study: Rational vs. Emotional). The Day came and the event as planned for two days went on flawlessly. This was a great boost to students as well as faculties. Its success was also special as it was the first baby event delivered successfully. It set a benchmark and a roadmap ahead for the coming batches to organize the same.

The next Akyutha was again a grant success with two days management events, with highlights like treasure hunt, tricky financial event, Jugaad (best out of waste), Live HR learning event, etc., and student batch which organized this time stood by

Akyutha tag line “By the Students, Of the Students, For the Students”. This event was meant to be totally done by the students from planning to execution and everything in between.

### **The Inspiration Behind**

Akyutha 2k16, as the name indicates was planned to schedule on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>2016; this was special as the students even without faculties initiating the discussion started working on it. As usual the lead was taken by MBA seniors; they wanted it to be Big really Big. All the before two Akyutha were restricted to core or allied management events (education based) but this time the students wanted to go for cultural events including singing (Group and Individual), dancing (Group and Individual) and fashion show(Group and Individual), call some famous singer from ‘sa re ga ma pa’, have DJ at the end and what not. In short they wanted it to be ‘Edutainment’ (Education + Entertainment) event, in which case it was required to make it three day event, two days for management events and third day entertainment event. When the discussion was on whether to add cultural event or not faculties came to know an interesting fact that few students have taken admission here only to make sure that they were part of organizing team. We as teachers felt happy about ourselves and proud of our students for leaving such an inspiration behind. But there were many doubts in everybody’s mind regarding financial part, because the kind of stage which our students were planning was costing around 2.5 lakhs including lighting. The reason for worry was also regarding getting sponsorship of this huge

amount as the entire cost for Akyutha 2k16 was around 5.2 lakhs. But students volunteered and assured to get the amount for the event.

It usually happens that faculties tell or sometimes force the students to get sponsorship for such events but this was an experience in itself for me where students are volunteering to get it. This only shows the zeal of students and the spirit which we as faculties have filled in them. This I am telling on the grounds that often these students are made to work voluntarily on projects and assignments which I believe has developed a sense of team work and bonding among team members which gives confidence of doing anything together. This emotion is difficult to inject otherwise through defined groups and assigned team members. As a teacher we do this only when it is needed for the spirit to be continuous, else I strongly believe allowing them work voluntarily and injecting this spirit will take them long way in their career in particular and life in general.

### **Akyutha 2k16**

The day before the event, pre event arrangements were going on students were all working in all roles from a leader to a follower, to a workmen, to a labour, to organizer. Even God was testing their spirit, as it rained heavily one night before the event (I can say this as Kalaburagi (then Gulbarga) is known for its severe summer), as it never rains during these days. Students uninstalled all the stalls meant for sponsors and two were meant to be given to micro entrepreneurs (under

Corporate Social Responsibility which was again volunteered by students) as we had taught them how to execute what they learn in the classroom. They stayed there at the campus by 2.00 am to make sure all the arrangements were properly done.

Next day, THE DAY, when I entered the campus, it was a glamorous arrangement made by students, the stage was set, the banners were put all over, the Selfie stage was set, and event rooms were set with all necessary arrangements with a pinch of music adding to the atmosphere to the organizers as well as participants until their registrations were done. There were sponsored uniforms given to all the students but we saw some students still in their pyjamas working to make sure everything goes on smoothly. After inauguration, two days events started with a record participation number of around 3500 students from various places.

The number of participants was another challenge added to the organizers. Coming to third day the challenge of managing the crowd was only getting worse. It was due to the reason that student organizers were busy with event other volunteers for various other works were very few in number. Then we teachers had to take up the role of volunteers and help the students organize things properly. But managing crowd which reached around 4000 by the cultural evening was testing our nervous. As they say every cloud has a silver lining, our alumni's who had come to encourage their juniors had taken the role of volunteer and were helping the organizers. If not for their volunteer gesture it would have been really

difficult to manage such a huge crowd. The entire event went on smoothly. The third day cultural zone which we had name as 'AURA' was a grand success. We received applauses from other departments (internal) and all the participating colleges (external) with a feedback that organizing such a stage and event especially for student of this region (Hyderabad – Karnataka Region) was commendable.

### **Failures**

Every coin has two phases if there is success at one end there has to be some failures at the other. After the events, all the organizers decided to meet including faculties. No doubt the event was a grand success but there were back stage differences among volunteers which needed to be raised and addressed. We realised that many financial decision were taken by students without prior permission of any faculty which led to no profit no loss from Akyutha 2k16, whereas from every Akyutha we used to have profit. There was miscommunication among volunteers which led to little delays in conducting events. Every soul wanted to have an important role leading to leadership clashes. During the discussion it was discovered that many had differences with many issues during the on-going of the event.

### **Success**

The biggest success of the event was students as organizers and volunteers realised that making people work under direction or voluntarily was not an easy task. And any amount of lectures for me as a HR faculty would be challenging to make

them realise this. They started appreciating teachers' effort in making them learn new things, understand human behaviours and learn various strategies to motivate people which are always situational. Students learnt HRM in true spirit. They also executed their marketing skills and had the best promotional activities resulting to 3500 participants. They had created their own website, following at Facebook, Twitter, Hangouts etc., and exhausted all technology based media. They also learnt not to handle financial matters without an expert's opinion especially when public money is involved.

### **Conclusion**

Education system should now be more open in terms of allowing their students to take up volunteering activities/work/assignment. If not we

should encourage students to look for volunteering opportunities. And if students do that and do it effectively and efficiently, it must be recognized and rewarded. During Akyutha 2k16 it discovered that students feel more empowered when they have the freedom to choose and execute projects cherished by them. Excelling in their real-life goals on the fields leads to increased motivation levels. Students during their post event feedback almost all the students said that the event united them as a team and also enabled them to work as a team develop better bond and develop situational leadership skills.

### **Reference:**

1. Authors experience during organizing Management Fest 'Akyutha – 2k16.