

Appraisal of experiential learning in apparel production

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The recent adoption of computers in the apparel industry signals a challenge to educators in higher education to revamp the apparel design curricula and include computer-aided design (CAD). Simulations of apparel design and the manufacturing process, aimed at effective transfer of knowledge and skills from classroom to workplace, augment teaching strategies. The Apparel Production Management Centre of Department of Textiles and Apparel Designing, College of Home Science, Udaipur is one of the founder centres of experiential learning established in the year 2008-09 to provide skill oriented hands on training. The strengths of ELC lie in flexibility in manufacturing versatile products in varied cost range with strong fabric base and value addition through creative skills of the budding designers using traditional regional motifs, with the materials of satin mix, tapestry for drapes and even cotton mixes with synthetics for the traditional look.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Appraisal, Learning, Apparel, Production

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The Department of Textiles and Apparel Designing, College of Home Science, Udaipur is well known to have established Experiential Learning centre of Apparel Production Management for quality teaching and hands on experience to undergraduate and post graduate students of the department with the objective to provide interactive learning experience in apparel production and generation of human resource to promote employment opportunities and entrepreneurial abilities through integration of basic knowledge and experiential learning.

The APM unit is fully functional and viable to impart skill based industrial training to vocational students of 2+2 B.Sc Home Science programme.

Concept of experiential learning :

The experiential learning in the area of apparel production management provides the students excellent opportunity to observe, think, analyze, synthesize, evaluate and apply the acquired knowledge. It is a field of exciting experience linked with creativity that challenges the students learning and application abilities. The fashion field demands students' involvement from the concept to the production of final products. Experiential learning starts with self-

discovery and continues with theory, information collection and analyses project based execution, finally ending with peer and faculty evaluation.

Facilities:

The department has a plethora of facilities, these provide the necessary infrastructure to run U.G., P.G. and Ph.D. courses effectively. All the laboratories are well equipped with state of art facilities and technologically advanced machineries and equipments.

Infrastructure:

The APM centre comprised of 3 units namely:

- Apparel Production Unit, Design Studio and
- Retail Unit to accomplish the objective of experiential learning.

The design studio have the latest software of of fashion designing and textile designing such as TUKatech - Pattern making, grading and marker making and Tukastudio - complete package of seven modules - design and repeat, colour ways, colour reduction and cleaning, knits, weave, jacquard storyboards, etc. besides having digitizer, plotter and LCD for presentation and group discussion.

Equipments and machineries:

Personal attention is given to vocational students to equip them technically with different aspects of advanced industrial sewing machines through various courses offered in IIIrd year course programme in order to make them confident and sharpen their creative skills in designing and handling of fabrics on various tools and machines.

Project execution:

By the end of the programme, the students become professionally trained in use of computer aided design development, pattern making, grading, marker making, multi layering fabric cutting, computer aided machine embroidery as per design of the pattern, lock stitching, bar tacking, button making, buttonhole making, elastic attaching, construction of knitted garments, adding decorative details with double needle decorative picot hem stitch on the designed garments.

Retail unit:

A good number of designers apparels and home textiles items are being developed by vocational students as part of experiential learning which are consistently being sold from the retail outlet of the university over the years which depict students hard work, creativity, artistic talents and skill in handling variety of fabrics.

Glimpses of retail unit:

Investment and selling pattern:

Fig. 1 depicts the total investment and selling pattern of experiential learning unit of APM since its establishment.

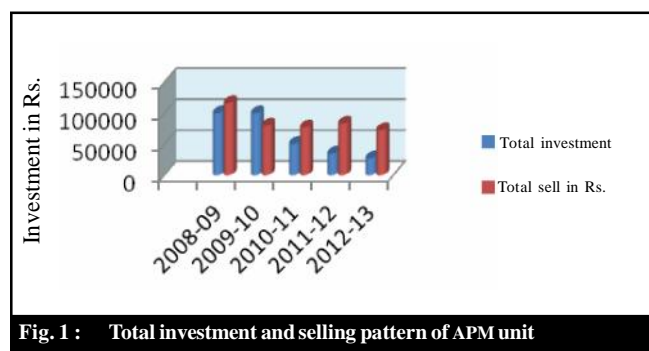


Fig. 1 : Total investment and selling pattern of APM unit

The figure clearly shows that there is an evergreen demand of versatile range of products developed from ELC on APM among consumers of Udaipur city. The major factors behind this can be categorized as – use of quality materials, strict quality control parameters, student's creative mind in presenting new product range, designer category of products, salesmanship (the students are involved in selling the products through retail units) nice presentation and display of products in the unit and overall cost effectiveness of the products.

Achievements:

Majority of the pass out vocational students used to go for higher education in search of better career option as depicted in Fig. 2. The reason when explored was found that students after getting skilled training develop thirst for learning more to refine their skills further which divert them to go for higher studies and make them self-confident.

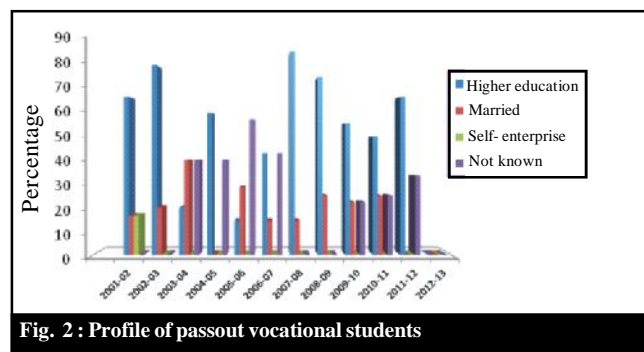


Fig. 2 : Profile of passout vocational students

Career options:

With present boom envisaged in the filled of textiles and apparel, the students have ample scope for developing entrepreneurial skills that help them establish domestic and global business. The HRD requirement of the emerging private sector offers tremendous scope for employment.

After completion of degree, students are equipped with latest knowledge, technology and skill in apparel manufacturing, fashion designing and textile designing so that they would prove to be an asset for any institute/organization /industry. They are well versed with new technology, computer applications and elements of entrepreneurship to start their own venture also. Hence, there is ample scope of employment opportunities after graduation and post graduation in the field of apparel, fashion and textile designing. Few of them are as follows:

- Designers in apparel industries
- In charge of sample making departments in apparel industries
- CAD professionals
- Free-lancer apparel designers
- Entrepreneurs

The overall appraisal of ELC on APM in terms of investment versus profit has been presented in Fig. 3, which clearly depicts its success profile.

It is worth mentioning here that the contingency provided during initial stage was used as revolving fund and a handsome revenue of Rs. 4.30 lakh generated after distributing 50 per cent profit among vocational students till June 2013, deposited in Developmental fund of the department. Further, the existing infrastructure and equipments facility has been extended to give inplant training

to students of other SAUs also since 2009 onwards.

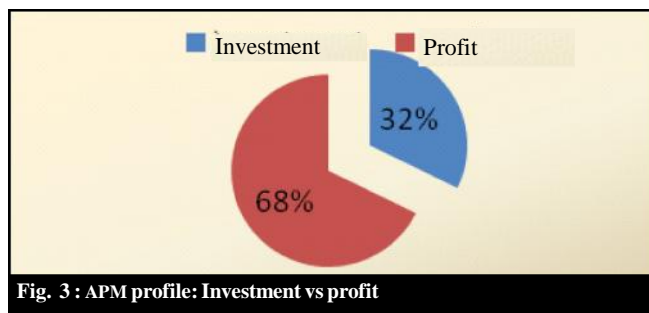


Fig. 3 : APM profile: Investment vs profit

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the experiential learning centre established in the Department of Textiles and Apparel Designing, College of Home Science, MPUAT, Udaipur,

Rajasthan is one of the pioneer centres developed under funding from ICAR, is functioning extremely well and imparting hands on training to vocational students on theme based projects to equip them with the professional expertise needed to survive as entrepreneur with industry people.

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