

7.3.1 Portray the performance of the Institution in one area distinctive to its priority and thrust within 1000 words

Dr. RM. Alagappa Chettiar, the esteemed founder of Alagappa University, epitomized the essence of philanthropy through his visionary pursuit of universal education. His noble vision to disseminate knowledge resonated deeply in his ardent mission to reach rural communities. With steadfast dedication to inclusivity, he endeavoured to dismantle barriers to education, ensuring that every individual, regardless of background or circumstance, could partake in the transformative journey of learning.

In the enduring legacy of Dr. RM. Alagappa Chettiar, Alagappa University assumes its pivotal role as a catalyst for educational equity and societal advancement. In 2010, with the backing of the **UGC Innovative Programme Fund of Rs. 60 lakhs**, the University embarked on a noble journey by introducing Special Education programs, with the credit of emerging as the premier State University to do so. This endeavour aimed to empower the differently-abled through education, setting the stage for a more inclusive society.

Subsequently, in 2013, the **Centre for Multimodal Material Production for Differently Abled** and **Para Sports Centre** were established under the **Government of Tamil Nadu Scheme**. These pioneering initiatives led to the creation of the **Alagappa University Resource School for Differently Abled** within the University Campus in 2014. Serving as **Feeder Units** to the Department, these entities catalyse transformative change by generating a diverse range of digitally accessible and multimedia materials tailored to cater to the various learning styles and abilities of students with disabilities.

Over the years, the University's commitment to promoting inclusive education has flourished. In 2016, through the exclusive **Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation Science**, the University illuminates the path towards a future where education transcends boundaries, granting every individual the opportunity to thrive and contribute to society. Furthermore, in 2022, the State Commissionerate for the Welfare of the Differently Abled, Chennai granted temporary recognition to two **Special Schools for Differently Abled (ID & Autism)** with salary grant worth of Rs.12,96,000/- per year funded by State Government of Tamil Nadu, amplifying its impact and outreach. Through these endeavours, the University laid the groundwork for

Inclusive and Special education, with an Innovative focus on Rehabilitation Education —an endeavour to serve children with disabilities.

Through a comprehensive array of specialized programs such as **B.Ed. Special Education**, **M.Ed. Special Education**, and the ground breaking **B.Ed.-M.Ed. Integrated Special Education Programme**, alongside **M.Sc. Psychology**, the Department of Special Education & Rehabilitation Science imparts invaluable knowledge to its students. These programs enable students to effect profound change in the lives of individuals with disabilities. The Department also offers a diverse range of services tailored to address their unique needs, including vocational training, career guidance, and personalized psychological support, alongside advanced assistive technological resources.

Thirteen students with visual impairments have successfully completed their B.Ed. Special Education Degree, while eight others have excelled in the M.Ed. Special Education program offered by the Department, emerging as adept and proficient special educators. Among these accomplished individuals, two notable students with visual impairments have triumphantly cleared the **National Eligibility Test (NET)**, paving the way for them to pursue their Doctoral Programmes with the support of the **National Fellowship for Persons with Disabilities (NFPwD)**. At the zenith of its academic pursuits, the Department proudly offers the **Ph.D. programme in Special Education**—an esteemed platform where scholars embark on rigorous intellectual journeys, engaging in critical inquiries that shape the discourse and practice within the field.

Through dynamic research projects conducted both at national and international levels, coupled with the adept research guidance offered by its erudite faculty members, the Department fosters innovative interventions and strategies for students with disabilities. Strategic alliances with renowned national and international institutes, as well as non-governmental organizations, serve as vital channels for collaboration and innovation, thereby enriching the academic terrain and catalyzing the Department's progress. The Department's **MoU with the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities** has been particularly instrumental, offering vital opportunities to train in-service teachers and orchestrate programs aimed at fostering societal awareness and inclusivity.

Aligned with the motto of "*Serve to Smile, Reach to Teach, and Model to Mould,*" the **Alagappa University Special School** offers exclusive services. Currently, the Special Schools cater to more than eighty children with a variety of disabilities, each benefiting from individualized education plans. These students regularly showcase their talents in national-level sports and cultural competitions, consistently achieving success with numerous prizes. Notably, one student attained a **Chola Book of Record** for practicing Silambam while walking. Furthermore, the successful clearance of Board Exams by five students from the Special School serves as a testament to the effectiveness of the specialized education they have received.

The **Para Sports Centre** of Alagappa University extends its services by providing specialized sports training to individuals with disabilities. Notably, students trained at this centre have achieved remarkable success at both national and international levels, securing accolades in prestigious competitions such as the ICWC, International Asia Cup, 8th World Dwarf Games, TWCPL 2020, Tamil Nadu Wheelchair Tournament, State Level Table Tennis Tournament, Sitting Volleyball Tournament, National Level Wheelchair Cricket, T-20 Series Wheelchair Cricket Tournament, IV Indian Open National Para Athletics, Para International Tournament, and IWAS World Games. Their accomplishments stand as a testament to the unwavering dedication of the University to uplift and serve disadvantaged communities.

The University further extends its dedicated services to students with disabilities through a range of specialized initiatives to promote inclusivity and empowerment:

- The **Enabling Unit** of the Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Science endeavours to promote equal opportunities and celebrate diversity, promoting a more inclusive campus environment for all.
- The **Artificial Limb Production Unit** utilizes cutting-edge equipment and expertise to design and fabricate customized prosthetic devices. These devices are tailored to the unique anatomical and functional requirements of every individual, providing physiotherapy to students with locomotor disabilities.
- The **Braille and Audio Book Production Unit** is dedicated to crafting top-tier Braille and DAISY audio learning materials, empowering individuals with visual impairments to actively participate in academic, literary, and recreational pursuits. Moreover, this unit

offers them exposure to cutting-edge technology such as the Blaze, Refreshable Braille Display, Braille Embosser, Tactile Maker, and Magnification Devices.

- The **Vocational Store by Differently Abled** stands as a poignant testament to the artistic prowess, resilience, and entrepreneurial zeal of individuals with disabilities from the Special School.

In the annals of history, the University will be recognized as a transformative force, offering comprehensive educational opportunities for students with disabilities and the University fulfils the visionary dream of its founder, Dr. RM. Alagappa Chettiar, to bestow the light of knowledge upon all. With each passing year, its legacy continues to grow, its influence deepens, and its dedication to inclusivity and innovation remains unwavering.