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EDUCATION PLUS

Cutting edge ideas



MANASA KAMBANNA

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Faculty at Amrita University speak about their engagement in the cutting edge areas of physics, engineering and medicine

Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, located at Coimbatore, Amritapuri, Bangalore, Mysore and Kochi offers courses in the fields of engineering, medicine, business, sciences and education. Amrita group of institutions was established by Mata Amritanandamayi Devi. While Coimbatore, Amritapuri and Bangalore campuses offer mainly Engineering courses, Kochi campus is dedicated to medicine and its allied courses. Though Bangalore campus, located near Central Jail, started off with only the school of Engineering in 2002, it has recently opened up a Management school too. The Amrita School of Management offers a dual-degree programme that encompasses an MBA from Amrita and an MS from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo, USA.

The Bangalore campus has faculty who are carrying out research in the cutting edge areas of computer science, electronics and business. Amudha J., faculty, Computer Science, who is working on processing the visual data (Computational Intelligence), said: "By tracking the eye that watches the computer screen, we can deduce not only what the browser is looking for but also a lot about him." Explaining about its applications in various fields, she said: "The technology is very useful in trying to



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Nagaraja S.R., Chairperson, Department of Mechanical Engineering, who has been instrumental in setting up a shockwave tunnel on the college campus, said: "In a country that has about four shockwave tunnels, Amrita is the first private entity to have owned one." The University has high technology equipments that are required for experiments of this magnitude. Dhanesh Kurup of Dept. of Electronics and Communication showed how electromagnetic ray antenna can be developed to use it in PHCs or homes to calculate bone-mineral density. The project is in partnership with some of the Swedish universities and companies. In the field of Bioinformatics, Prashant Athri, faculty, Dept. of Computer Science said, "we have proposed to map the genotype of Indian population as the tablets designed for Caucasian race fail to function effectively on Asian populations."

Amalendu Jyotishi of Business School has collaborated with Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research and University of Amsterdam, Ghana, East Carolina and Worldfish Kwame Nkrumah for a project that he has nick-named as 'Fish For Food'. Given the low consumption of fish, except in Kerala, his idea is to make fish available and accessible for the poor in the Indian cities in order to enhance their nutrition levels.

Working on Human Language Technology, Deepa Gupta, faculty, Dept. of Mathematics, threw some light on the limitations faced by the existing software that detect plagiarism. "Cleverly paraphrased, summarised and translated copies still escape the plagiarism test. The content that is cited also is considered plagiarised," she stated. She and her team have developed a new plagiarism detection software that addresses the above stated problems. It colours the contents copied from different sources differently instead of highlighting it monochromatically which shortens the process of locating sources. "Our software searches at syntax-semantic level rather than at the level of surface matching," she added.

Amrita being a deemed University conducts its own entrance exams for all its courses including B.Tech. The dual degree (MBA-MS) of Business School is heavily priced because of its foreign degree and travel.

"The top ten scorers of Amrita entrance exam get scholarships up to 90 per cent. Karnataka domiciled candidates do get preference," said Sukumaran, Marketing head of the Vidyapeetham. Though Amrita like other private universities in the country provides scholarships on merit, there has not been scholarships for the poor or backward classes. Irrespective of the fact that Amrita establishment has been carrying out philanthropic activities throughout the country including a free hospital near Bidadi, off Bangalore, there has to be an institutionalised fee deduction for interested and able students who cannot afford such a fee structure. When the availability of infrastructure and quality education becomes accessible to all, does the University which is known for its values stands fruitful.

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