

# FEASIBILITY REPORT OF MANIFESTO FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY (LITERARY)

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## Vision

*To ingrain Saarang into the cultural fabric of the region  
To unleash the cultural potential of the institute through Sangam and LitSoc*

## Saarang

### **Move towards Free Proshows:**

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#### **1. Free EDM Night Gallery for institute students. Reduced prices for Rock Show**

##### **Problem:**

The Saarang experience is currently a little expensive for patrons both within the institute and otherwise. In addition to this, fests much smaller than Saarang are adopting a free show model, as they receive immense funding from the institute. This will affect us in the long run as these fests can potentially compete with us for audience.

##### **Solution and Proof of Concept:**

###### EDM Night:

The value of the bowl and fan pass section is to be increased by investing more on the artist and night experience. The same will be incentivised by incorporating lucrative combos and early bird offers. A full-fledged effort combined with novel ticket sales models will be initiated to capitalize on the emerging EDM scene in Chennai and to redirect non-institute ticket sales, to the bowl and fan pass. Access to the comedy show bowl will be restricted by nominal ticketing which would serve the dual purpose of solving audience management issues and to reduce the cost per night, by spreading it across more avenues. The additional revenue generated will provide the financial freedom to make EDM gallery free for institute students, making it more accessible.

###### Popular night:

Introspection of the model from last year suggests that a lower ticketing model would have increased footfall and hence generated more revenue, contributing to financial stability and festival value.

###### Rock Show:

Rock show expenditure will have to come down in order to accommodate lower ticket prices, since revenue generation is constrained by the lack of considerable and loyal rock enthusiasts in the city. Apart from being the oldest surviving college professional show in the country and an integral part of the Saarang brand, Rock Show also imparts value to Decibels acting as the launchpad for semi-professional bands in the country thereby proving it to be an indispensable part of Saarang.

The model will be incorporating low ticket prices and show sustainability:

- Charity Rock Show: Tie up with an NGO to conduct Rock Show under the CSR label along with Choreo Night ensuring lower artist quotes
- Embassy-sponsored Rock Show

## Enhancing Fest Value

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### ***2. Impact Driven Social Wing: A dedicated team to forge a campaign that is sustainable over the years with the aim to achieve UNESCO patronage***

**Problem:** The social wing should be isolated from PR as its purpose is to create impact and not just generating good PR. The current team structure of the Sponsorship team cannot amass enough manpower and effort for a full-scale campaign, without compromising on PR.

**Solution:**

The Social Wing will become a sub department under the Non-Competitive Events department. The team structure will be dependent on the theme and campaign chosen. The proposed function cycle is as follows:

- Setting Desired Impact
- Associate with relevant NGOs to funnel the impact
- Leverage the talent base of Clubs and Saarang Network to conduct events and spike awareness
- Complete Impact
- Reach out to contributors
- Follow Up till transferred to next year's team

UNESCO patronage for events conducted will legitimise the campaign and help gather more support.

**Proof of Concept:**

- Pledge-A-Book by Shaastra: A dedicated team handled the execution of campaign to establish a library in schools. Sourcing, Logistics and Publicity Stunts by the Engage team. Campaign was impact driven and PR was generated as a consequence.
- Shaastra Blind Hackathon: A team of 6 worked on creating a volunteer base for training visually challenged students to code over the period of a semester. The campaign culminated in a hackathon to create apps by the blind for the blind. Impact was primary focus and PR was a by-product
- UNESCO patronage for other fests: NIT Trichy's Pragyan, Anna University's Kurukshetra and IIT Bombay's Techfest have received the above-mentioned recognition.

### ***3. Elevate the Saarang Brand: Restructure the Sponsorship & PR team to create specific focus and expertise to portray Saarang in all its brilliance.***

**Problem:**

Current Sponsorship team structure creates efficiency and expertise in Sponsorship. That is the reason we see a surge in the team's performance every year. But the improvement in PR has not caught up with it. The analysed reasons are as follows:

- The difference in skill set necessary for content generation and content dispersal
- Shift in focus to kind and PR deals during mid-tenure affects content generation.
- The PR strategist position is considered less valuable as it is a dead end in the POR Ladder. Hence accumulation of PR experience doesn't take place.

**Solution:**

- The job description for the PR strategists will be such that the Sponsorship and PR cores will be equally open to them with one core more inclined to work on the PR. The Strategists now have a POR ladder to climb. Hence accumulation of knowledge and experience can now take place. This also solves the problem of disadvantage to coords who joined team as third year coords and not as 2<sup>nd</sup> year creatives.



- The Content generation team will closely work with the design team for ideation. It will also collaborate with cultural clubs to create quality content
- The PR team will specialise in PR deals, media handles, analytics and automation tools. Developing expertise in audience segmentation, identifying channels to reach them and efficiently deploy content. They will assist in building full PR life cycles for events, from well before the event to after the event, across verticals in Saarang.

#### **Proof of Concept:**

- Shastra Creatives: The separation of content generation from the creative team improved content generation. The focus resulted in quality content and performance of the social media handles in comparison to previous years.
- Saarang Nova: The team spent one week working on Online PR and media for Comic Book Week during December. We achieved the highest activity and participation for the event in comparison to other metros, so much so that Comic Con India were surprised. The same process was replicated for Game Plex, which also saw a lot online buzz. This is the impact of focused effort on PR.

#### ***4. Anchoring Saarang's presence in Chennai: Continuous and targeted publicity to make Saarang the centerpiece of the city's cultural calendar.***

##### **Problem:**

Despite objectively being the largest fest in the region, we have not been able to substantiate it with our presence in Chennai. A large section of the city is not aware of the existence of IIT Madras, let alone Saarang. Our publicity effort should be able to build a loyal base in the city, that will talk about our fest year on year.

The current publicity plan has a lot of focus on outreach outside of Chennai. In the form of Milans. The Student Ambassador system is not very effective, because of the heavy dilution of information. Current activity in Chennai is scattered and often too close to Saarang itself. For becoming a cultural force in Chennai, a more systematic approach with regular activity is needed.

**Solution:**

The crowd can be largely separated as the Pre-College Crowd, College Crowd, Post College crowd and Miscellaneous. Each of these segments need different techniques.

- Pre-College: Schools are the most responsive. Conducting events at various school fests should be done, especially in a city with a very strong inter-school cultural scene. Additionally, participants can be funneled through the school administration by leveraging the Saarang brand. This segment is going to be the future college crowd.
- College Crowd: This segment forms our base crowd. Major colleges should be targeted, and events conducted in each one of them to generate buzz about Saarang. Additionally, considerable effort to push for contingent formation at all these college must be done
- Post College: This is entirely case specific. But we need to be aware of other major cultural events in the city that attract a more mature audience.

**Proof of Concept:**

- Informal events were successfully conducted at the cultural fest of Chettinad Vidyashram during summer.
- Face Of Saarang elimination rounds were planned to be conducted across colleges in Chennai through the semester. One event was conducted with great success. Misunderstanding about the nature of the event with the IIT-M Admin, halted further progress
- A certain media outlet offered stall presence at a Concert during Margazhi, a yearly period of classical music events. This could have helped us boost Classical Night crowd.

### ***5. Saarang Overall Championship: Increase the value of Saarang events by fuelling them with College spirit and rivalry***

**Problem:**

Individual events at Saarang, despite their superior quality, are all not brands on their own. It is valuable only to those who participate. To increase the importance of individual events, we need other forces to increase viewership and audience. Also, College Secretaries and Administrators don't have any tangible incentive for sending contingents.

**Solution:**

Instituting an overall trophy will channelize college spirit. The college crowd will be a lot more aware of events happening during the four days to encourage their college teams at various event. The overall championship will also make the contingent approach to college participation more effective, as they now have an objective. The effort needed to maintain a leader board during Saarang is quite minimal, but the impact is significant.

**Proof of Concept:**

- NIT Trichy's Festember has an overall trophy system, and is a coveted title among college circuits. The organisers were contacted to identify potential challenges.
- The impact of a leader board on participation and event value can be gauged from the success of LitSoc

**6. *Cashless Saarang: Shift towards electronic payment methods to reduce liquid cash flow, eliminate money transfer hassles and improve in-Saarang economics***

**Problem:**

Handling and tracking of liquid cash during Saarang is an organisational nightmare. In addition to this, demonetisation has reduced the total available liquid cash in circulation. Another finance related issue is the transference of prize money. The delays in transfer of funds because of incorrect details or lack of the same is frustrating for participants.

**Solution:**

Electronic payment methods will largely reduce liquid cash. If the Saarang Account has enough cash during the 4 days, Prize Money can be instantaneously transferred to the participants, if the participant opts for it. If sufficient cash is not available, instant prize money option can be rendered only to a certain set of events. This will encourage them to spend more at food stalls or on tickets at Saarang itself as they now have cash in hand. Although liquid cash cannot be entirely eliminated, we can approach very close to ideality.

**Proof of Concept:**

- Shaastra was nearly cashless. Though the reduced crowd may not simulate conditions of Saarang, it still verifies the acceptance of the digital payments.
- PayTM was contacted to verify if they are interested in an association with Saarang. They were thrilled by the idea and were ready to remove transfer limit and provide lucrative cash back offers, in addition to sponsorship amount. The acceptance of UPI and BHIM by merchants will have to be studied in the coming months before taking a call on adopting the same over PayTM.

## **Sangam and LitSoc**

**Conducive Cultural Scene:**

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**1. *Bringing events closer to home: Increased utilisation of spaces in and around the hostel zone like Himalaya, Quark and other new space to lower barriers for Sangam activities.***

**Problem:**

Going to all the way back to CRC, after classes for the day are done, is a barrier to entry for events. This issue is pronounced across all years. Hostel secretaries find it very difficult to push new people for events. People returning from NSO or sports practice also find it hard to attend these events after coming back to the hostel zone. There is also the issue of attenuation of participants after the dinner break. They prefer to stay indoors than go all the way to CRC or CLT for events.

**Solution:**

Increasing the variety and number of events conducted in spaces near the hostel zone. Himalaya and Quark will be used more effectively. This will reduce effort needed and help in retention after the dinner break. Additionally, active effort to get a dedicated club space will be taken forward from previous year's secretaries. This move however, may not create much impact on Sarayu, Sabarmati and Sharavathi participation. But the overall impact will be significant.

**Proof of Concept:**

- Events already happen at Himalaya with significant success. This year new set of events were conducted to increase viewership, and the results were positive.
- Cauvery Mess will be closed down and the decision to allot caterers to 2nd floor of the new mess near Krishna Hostel has not been made yet. The Dean (Students) confirmed that there is a possibility that one of these spaces can be opened up for student activities.

**2. *Cultural support for hostels: Monetary support for intra hostel events and setting up of basic infrastructure to foster cultural interest at the hostel level.*****Problem:**

Lack of inventory and unforeseen damages to existing ones which are beyond what the hostel budget can account for, renders hostel cultural spaces inoperative and incomplete. Such scenarios rule out the opportunity of exploring a new hobby/passion which might otherwise require heavy initial investment (drumming, keyboard). Budget constraints also limit hostels from hosting and incentivising intra hostel events, which once conducted, would potentially open up various new events to a hostel inmate.

**Solution:**

The Sangam budget will be used to replenish and repair hostel inventory pertaining to cultural activities with special emphasis given to the hostel music rooms. Saarang vouchers and goodies will be allocated to the hostels and will be used to incentivise intra hostel events.

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**Inclusivity and Diversity****3. *New clubs in Sangam: Classical Dance Club and Cooking Club (in association with the Hostel Affairs Secretary) will be added to expand the cultural spectrum of the institute.*****Problem:**

- The Cooking Club currently functions under the HAS. There isn't a POR ladder available for the coords or the conveners. Influx of coordinators is solely dependant on interest. Also, the work profile is currently restricted to conducting sessions.
- The Choreo Club right now specialises in western dance forms. They don't possess the network, experience or focus to expose the institute community to classical and folk dance forms

**Solution:**

- Collaborate with HAS and bring the Cooking Club under Sangam patronage. Budget will come from Sangam and HAS will aid in handling relations with the mess. Two coords from in the Team will be a part of Mess Monitoring Committee. The prospect of a Saarang Coordship, due to the introduction of the Food Fest, will aid in attracting conveners and coordinators.
- Formation of Classical Dance Club. This club will have conveners and coordinators from a Classical dance background. Their experience and knowledge can be leveraged. The activities of the Club will include, bringing workshops, shows for cultural awareness and in the long run, form a semi-classical dance contingent for IIT-Madras.

**Proof of Concept:**

- Cooking sessions have taken place successfully. Logistics of the club has already been validated. The Saarang Food Fest was also successfully conducted. Both these objectives will be combined under Sangam. Funding was provided to the Cooking Club this year also from Sangam for equipment purchase, hence long term support for the club can be expected.
- Saarang Classical Dance events was separated from Music this year. A coordinator with Classical Dance background was selected. The event saw massive scale up in participation and quality.

**4. *Recognition of vernacular talent: Increase number of large scale multi-lingual events. Assist Sabhas and Samithis to organise selected events which showcase vernacular wealth.***

**Problem:**

- All Sabhas and Samitis do not possess the resources necessary for conducting cultural events. Also, the general student body is not aware about these events, where the vernacular talent of the institute is showcased.

**LitSoc to Propel Culture**

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**5. *Nurturing Freshie Talent: A series of events wherein freshie groups lead by their mentor hostels compete against each other for LitSoc points.***

**Problem:**

The current system fails to break the competitive barrier put forward by LitSoc veterans that subsequently hinder a smooth and pleasant LitSoc introduction for the freshies. Also, it does not provide enough incentives to the respective mentoring hostel secretaries to take up an additional responsibility of mobilising their allotted freshies while they are busy with the same event in their hostel.

**Solution:**

The LitSoc freshie league seeks to combine the less competitive nature of the freshie-only events and the drive for additional litsoc points instilled in the mentor hostels by the freshie allocation system. A series of freshie events spread out across all the litsoc verticals will have freshie groups, segregated based on their mentor hostels, compete amongst each other in a league format. The same will be a big group event for the mentor hostels. The events will be scheduled to match breaks in litsoc so that the mentor hostel secretaries are not overburdened and will be available to oversee and mentor their respective freshie contingents.

**Proof of concept:** Freshie Litsoc Events already take place with moderate success, hence the logistic feasibility of this initiative is verified. This year's system has started the trend of freshie mentorship. This points system is aimed at channelling more effort.

**6. *Equal importance to all clubs: Normalise points across clubs to encourage hostels to invest time and effort in all verticals***

**Problem:**

Unequal weightage given to different verticals with respect to the total points amassable from each of them. Previous solutions aimed at increasing cultural activities by increasing the number

and variety of events under each vertical. Doing so, the effort required for each event was overlooked. Hostels specialising in points intensive verticals commanded an undue advantage.

**Solution:**

With each vertical offering equal take-aways with respect to LitSoc points, hostels will be required to focus on multiple verticals thereby assuring participation and focus across the cultural spectrum.

**Empowering Clubs:**

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**7. *Establishing IITM's Cultural Prowess: Send a Mega-Contingent to selected fests to build a sense of pride and belonging in our cultural community***

**Problem:** The full might of our cultural talent has not been realised, as our current approach is club centric and scattered. Members of individual clubs identify strongly with their clubs. But an overall sense of belonging to the cultural community is lacking. Additionally, Colleges are demand for contingents when we approach them to send contingents for our fest.

**Solution:** Participate as a fully coordinated contingent spanning all verticals to certain college fests. This in addition to the fests that individual clubs go for as part of their year plans. Since clubs which are practise intensive are fully prepared with sets by the start of the Even Semester, fests during this period will be targeted. Incase fests outside Chennai become logistically difficult, fests in the city will be targeted. This will unite the cultural community of the institute.

**Proof of Concept:**

- The Quiz Club has sent contingents as big as 27 to fests outside Chennai. Same effort can be directed across clubs.
- The Senate has passed a ruling for attendance waiver for up to 5 classes for college representation in cultural fests. Hence students won't be forced to risk attendance for participating.

**8. *Saarang Sangam Synergy: Increased utilisation of Saarang resources to maximise the scale and reach of Sangam activities. Harnessing club talent and network for content generation and outreach for Saarang.***

**Problem:**

- The lack of clear definitions of the roles of Saarang Cores in Sangam has left it devoid of a robust support structure. A separate support structure for Sangam will not be a sustainable solution due to the lack of a POR ladder.
- The Club Outreach Committee as a concept is instrumental to improve the cultural scene. But the current system is ineffective, as the teams that need to participate do not feel invested in the Cultural Scene.
- There are no acknowledged benefits of the Saarang Team investing in the Institute Cultural Scene for Saarang.

**Solution:**

- The cores will be defined as Saarang-Sangam Cores. The title change and associated role additions will make all cores accountable to the general student body, as they are now going to handle resources funded by them. The new roles should also add value to Saarang in some form, so the teams will feel invested in the institute cultural scene. The additional roles and the mutual benefits are listed below:



- i. Publicity team to spearhead internal publicity for clubs. They will also gain expertise into much needed internal publicity during the 4 days of Saarang to ensure mobilisation of institute crowd and in general improve information dispersal during Saarang.
- ii. QMS to streamline interdepartmental relations for Sangam requirements. This will make sure that, when the QMS Managers are internalised from the very start, and the team will be familiar with "Saarang Style Process Flows" way before Saarang. They will also work on Club Analytics. The team, over the semester will gain experience and expertise in data collection and analysis through Sangam. The knowledge gained here will be put to use on a larger scale for Saarang to gain actionable insights.
- iii. Sponsorship team to raise funds for flagship events: This will add value to the flagship events in general. It would also act as the ideal training ground for aspiring coordinators from within the creative team and outside.
- iv. A yearlong association wherein the proshows team will be responsible for embassy supported workshops and demonstrations that will add value to Sangam. The same would assist the WCS team to experiment with new embassies and types of acts, without the constraints of dates. This will also strengthen Saarang-embassy relations and would, embassies and hence would help with the WCS shows held during Saarang
- v. The cultural talent of the institute will be leveraged for content generation. This will add novelty and quality to the content pushed out. This in turn will increase recognition of institute talent.

#### **Proof of Concept:**

- The Events team uses Sangam events and Litsoc events as a training ground for coordinators and a testing ground for new events. This is a significant driver of effort for Sangam by the Saarang teams.
- Publicity team and Hospitality team assisted in internal publicity for Club Weekender. Formalising their roles in Sangam will generate focus.
- Pre Saarang WCS acts were conducted this year. The logistics of the events have been verified.
- Music Club and the Media Club collaborated on two videos, both of which were uploaded on the Saarang Page. The videos were very well received. Formalisation of such content generation via the newly formed content generation wing will streamline the process.

#### **9. Increase Focus on Clubs: Events department will be split into Non-Competitive and Competitive events, to create focus and direct more effort into Club functions**

##### **Problem:**

- The current team structure, puts the conveners under the Event Cores for Saarang and Litsoc. The Clubs are completely autonomous. Although autonomy and creative freedom of clubs fuels our cultural scene, the conveners and coords need assistance in systematic planning and execution of Club events and activities.
- The number of competitive event verticals is a lot for two people to handle, and can lead to unequal attention across verticals. But the framework of approach, by and large is the same for all of them. On the other hand, the objectives of Non-Competitive events are different and methods diverse.

**Solution:** The team will be split into Competitive and Non-competitive. The Competitive Event Cores will have special focus on Clubs. While the Non-Competitive Event Cores will focus on expanding the verticals under them.

##### **Proof of Concept:**

The Mood Indigo team uses similar structure for its events.

### Credentials

- Events Core, Sangam & Saarang (2016-17)
- Literary Secretary, Ganga Hostel (2015-16)  
Finished 5<sup>th</sup>, after briefly topping the table
- Hostel Choreo, Quizzing, Comedy & Design Team
- Instrumental in IIT Madras's Hat-trick victory at Nihilanth, Inter IIT-IIM Quiz Fest (2015-16)