



# PURBASTHALI COLLEGE

ESTD: 2009

Vill + P.O:-Parulia, Dist: - Purba Bardhaman, PIN 713513

Email: -[purbasthalicollege@gmail.com](mailto:purbasthalicollege@gmail.com), Visit us: - [www.purbasthalicollege.com](http://www.purbasthalicollege.com)

## Best Practice 1

### 1. Title

Gender Sensitization and Women Empowerment

### 2. Objectives

- To make Higher Education accessible to rural women;
- To redress gender discrimination and promote gender equity;
- Ensuring equal opportunities for female students in education;
- Empowering women by creating an environment where women feel respected, valued, and empowered;
- Conducting consciousness-raising programmes and sensitizing the students regardless of their gender about gender disparity and challenge gender stereotypes;
- Providing support services for the women to march forward;
- Encouraging representation of women.

### 3. Context

Situated in a rural landscape, Purbasthali College provides higher education mostly to the first generation learners coming from lower-middle class strata that places priority on the higher education of male children and women are considered liabilities. The educational quest of the female students is thwarted by various repressions, familial pressures, as well as matrimonial obligations from an early age. Moreover, a lack of awareness about women's rights, lack of confidence, paucity of knowledge about menstrual hygiene and self-defense make them susceptible to various forms of victimization, such as bullying, harassment, and marginalization. In response to this, the institute has realized an urgent need for intervention and has taken up the responsibility of sensitizing the students as well as local inhabitants about gender-based oppressions, providing higher education to women, and promoting women empowerment through a series of targeted initiatives.

### 4. Practice

The institute recognizes that the historical and systematic injustices since ages have forced the women to become marginalized, and thus, it transcends the notion of equality to embrace the conviction that providing equity would lead to equality. The institute perceived the need for providing female students various opportunities to make them feel homely. Their safety and security is taken care of by continuous surveillance system to monitor any unwanted incidents. They are also provided with a 'room of their own' with toilet, recreational facilities, and sanitary napkin vending machine. The institute has special assistance for girl students to ensure that they receive monetary benefits in the form of scholarships without any delay. They are provided with various levels of support systems in the form of their own teachers and other institutional mechanisms for registering their complaints. Female students are provided with special guidance, and counseling to excel in studies. They are also given opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making processes as members of various committees. The institute understands that in order to make a change, both men and women are required to be sensitized about the gender discourse, and organizes following programmes:

- e-Conference on "Surpassing Boundaries to Create/Critique Identities: A Praxis of 'Female'",
- Webinar on "Mental Stress and Suicidal Tendencies of the New Generation in this Pandemic Situation",
- Webinar on "Mental Health and Wellbeing of Students",
- Special lecture on "Bharatiya Sikkhae Bharater Bivinnno Panchabarshiki Parikolponar Provab: Nari Sikkhar Khetra",
- Webinar on "Complicating Gender: Reflections on Literature, Society, and Culture",
- Seminar on "Gender Sensitization: Understanding and Overcoming Gender Stereotypes",
- Workshop on "Gender Sensitization",

  
Principal  
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- Seminar on "Sensitization about Gender Equality",
- Seminar on "Women Empowerment",
- Seminar on "Realizing Women's Rights and Gender Sensitivity",
- Workshop on "Gender Equality and Women's Rights",
- Special Lecture on "Beyond Boundaries: Empowering Women in Today's World",
- Poster competition on "Save and Educate Girl Child",
- Electoral Literacy Campaign on "Her Vote, Her Voice".

The NSS wing organized various extension activities in the neighbourhood of the college to spread awareness, such as-

- "Beti Bachao, Beti Pado",
- "Girl-Child Education",
- "Campaign on Gender Equality",
- "Campaign on Protect Your Girl Child from Early Marriage",
- "Woman Education Campaign",
- "Campaign on Stop Sexual Violence against Women".
- Women's Cell organized "Empower her: a Comprehensive Self-defense Training Programme for Women", a free-of-cost training programme to equip the female students with skills to protect themselves.
- The faculty members of the institute also undertake researches on gender equity.
- Department of Education organized a play, "Chetana", to spread awareness on women empowerment.

## 5. Evidence of Success

Evidence of success for the initiatives undertaken by the college for the last five years is reflected in various ways:

- An analysis of the data regarding enrolment of female students reveals that half of the enrolled students are women which showcases the efficacy of the practice;
- During the last few years, the number of female students excelling in the university examinations are as high as their male counterparts;
- During the last few years, more number of female students participated in the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- There were no reported incidents of sexual harassment of any kind during the last five years;
- There are more number of female students in the committees than the male students;
- Female students have become mentally stronger, beaming with confidence, and attend classes enthusiastically;
- Feedbacks from the female students reveal high level of satisfaction with the institutional infrastructure and gender policies for their personal growth, development, and overall safety.
- The tendency of marrying off the female children has been reduced to some extent.

## 6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The primary problem encountered while implementing the policies are the societal attitudes and gender biases as the hegemonic norms prevalent in the society consider female children as liabilities for whom higher education is redundant. The locational disadvantage of the college acts as a deterrent as commuting through long solitary road surrounded by trees coupled with lack of financial resources to afford daily means of transportation poses serious challenge to the noble initiative of the institute.

Financial assistance in the form of grants is required to support and improve the efficacy of the initiatives taken by the institute. Additional financial aid would assist the institute in arranging free-of-cost transportation services to the students. It would also enable the institute to provide vocational training, internship possibilities, and job-centric training to the female students to give them opportunity to earn while they learn.

*B. Saha*  
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