



# PURBASTHALI COLLEGE

ESTD: 2009

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

Email: -purbasthalicollege@gmail.com, Visit us: - www.purbasthalicollege.com

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## 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",



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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.



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## Best Practice 2

### 1. Title

Recognition of Achievements

### 2. Objectives

The objectives of the practice are the following:

- To promote a culture which appreciates and recognizes achievements of the students, faculty members, and staff;
- Providing an inclusive and supportive environment where each stakeholder feels satisfied, valued, and motivated to perform;
- Facilitating personal, professional, and skill development of the students as well as the faculty members, and staff;
- Foster a sense of belonging, commitment, and pride among the stakeholders;
- To provide inspiration and encouragement for excellence and innovation;
- Foster mutual cooperation and collaboration among students, faculty members, and staff of different departments.

### 3. The Context

Being situated in a rural landscape with geographical challenges, the college possesses limited resources and infrastructure in comparison to its peers in the nearby locality which can lead to a sense of alienation among the students, faculty members, and staff. Moreover, the students of the college primarily hail from agrarian communities and most of them are first generation learners who face many obstacles for accessing higher education and require constant encouragement to pursue higher education. Traditional gender norms also contribute to demotivating female students from continuing their studies. The number of full-time faculty members and staff are also less in comparison to the workload which can also result in burnout, decreased productivity, feeling of lack of motivation, and increased dissatisfaction with the workplace. These challenges call for effective strategies that can mitigate any negative consequence and offer encouragement for greater commitment, ignite a quest for knowledge, excellence, and selfless service, contributing to organizational success.

### 4. The Practice

To overcome these challenges the college responds by implementing various innovative policies optimizing its limited resources. The institute professes to provide an inclusive and supportive environment which prioritizes the well-being of the stakeholders and develops a sense of belonging. In the context of the institute where access to amenities hinders academic progress, the institute recognizes every achievement, no matter how small, to motivate the students for pursuing higher education. Every year, the institute confers multiple awards in recognition of academic achievements, invaluable service, accomplishments in sports and games, female performers, achievements of differently abled students, community service, and contribution to the college. The following awards are given to inspire its stakeholders to strive for excellence:

- ‘Guru Gaurav Puraskar’ to the outstanding performer in the field of teaching;
- ‘Seva Bhushan Samman’ to the non-teaching staff in recognition of invaluable service;
- ‘Jyotirmoy Puraskar’ recognizing contribution in research;
- ‘Purbasthali Mahavidyalaya Pragati Puraskar’ acknowledging unique contribution in any area for the growth and development of the institution;
- ‘Nari Shakti Puraskar’ to the outstanding female achiever in the field of academics from the backward castes, specifically from the SC, ST communities;



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- ‘Aparajita Prerana Puraskar’ recognizing the indomitable spirit and achievement of the differently abled students;
- ‘Gyan Gaurav Puraskar’ to the top academic performer across all disciplines;
- ‘Krira Jyoti Puraskar’ to the outstanding female athlete across all forms of athletics.

The institute also conducts various competitions, including sports, cultural, singing, poster, dance, quiz, etc. throughout the year and every achiever is rewarded in recognition of their exceptional talent. The short duration add-on courses offered by the institute not only provide the students an opportunity to acquire necessary skills required for excelling in their future endeavours, but also to gain confidence in the context where dream of achieving higher education often seem distant. Those who complete the courses successfully are provided with certificates in a ceremonious event where enthusiastic applause provides them confidence and determination to achieve even greater heights. These small celebrations instill a sense of pride in the students who slowly come to realize their hidden potential from the loud cheers of the audience and constant support and encouragement from their mentors. The institute makes the students believe in themselves, provides them dream to achieve, gives inspiration, ignites thirst for knowledge, and helps them to become resilient to face future challenges. The institute maintains well established criteria and transparency in selecting and evaluating the nominees for the said awards.

## 5. Evidence of Success

The practice of recognizing achievements of the students as well as the staff of the college proved to be beneficial in following ways:

- Improved retention rate: retention rate of students has improved from the year 2018-19 (52.72%) to the year 2022-23 (66.82%), retention rate of faculty members is also very high as only one faculty member during the assessment period has taken transfer;
- Improvement in pass percentage: there is significant improvement in pass percentage from the year 2018-19 (30.99%) to the year 2022-23 (72.14%);
- Increased participation in different activities: during the last few years, participation of students in various student enrichment programmes and community activities has increased;
- Very high happiness index: the institute also has very high happiness index (4.4 in 5 point scale, data from 2022-23);
- Improved class attendance: the percentage of students’ attendance in classes has also increased;
- Fostering a sense of unity and belonging: the celebration of achievements of the stakeholders resulted in fostering a sense of unity and belongingness;
- Enhanced visibility of the institute: the reputation and visibility of the institute has also enhanced.

## 6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The lack of job opportunities for the students poses a serious problem for the students as they do not want to continue their study. The remote location of the college also hinders the academic pursuits of the students as most of them come from low-income group families and they are unable to afford daily transport facilities. The lack of adequate financial resources of the college also warrants assistance from the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal as well as various non-government organizations, and local bodies in order to fund the awards.