

Rabindra Mahavidyalaya
Champadanga, Hooghly



7.2: Best Practices

7.2.1: Describe two best practices successfully implemented by the Institution as per NAAC format provided in the Manual



Best Practice – I

Rabindra Mahavidyalaya, Champadanga

1. Title of the Practice

An Integrated Approach to Promoting Social Justice and Mental Health in Today's Youth during the Post-COVID Era

Due to the difficulties encountered since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, young people worldwide are dealing with "devastating" mental health issues on a daily basis. Young people have been exposed to social isolation and disconnection as a result of prolonged school and university closures. This can exacerbate emotions of worry, uncertainty, and loneliness and result in emotional and behavioral issues. Being forced to stay at home may have raised the likelihood of abuse or stress in the family for some kids and teenagers, all of which are risk factors for mental health issues. According to a quick evaluation, 45% of women reported having encountered violence in their homes during the first year of the epidemic, either directly or indirectly. This indicates that women have also confronted higher levels of stress at home as per the report published by the World Health Organization. Due to this outbreak, teenagers have experienced a number of first-time occurrences over the last three years, including as extended quarantines, closed schools, strained peer relationships, COVID infections, the loss of loved ones, and a general feeling of unpredictability in their lives. The pertinent literature reveals that the COVID-19 pandemic has a negative effect on young people's mental health.

2. Objectives

The purpose of this outreach programme is to inform our pupils about the fundamentals of social awareness and mental health in the face of stressful circumstances during the pandemic age.

3. The Context

Teenagers who are under lockdown or are affected by the COVID-19 epidemic may have both short-term and long-term psychological and mental health problems. Our college students' situation is not an anomaly. There are many vulnerability variables that have a significant impact on students, including developmental stage, educational attainment, pre-



existing mental health conditions, socioeconomic deprivation, and isolation due to infection or fear of infection.

Keeping their present mental health condition in mind, our institution has organized a programme titled “*Developing Mental Health and Social Awareness Programme for current Generations*” just after reopening of the College under the aegis of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and Women’s Cell of Rabindra Mahavidyalaya in collaboration with WHY (Wellbeing and Happiness for You), an independent and non-profit making Organization accredited by The National Council of Education, Bengal (NCEB) addressing the social and cultural backdrop of mental health and developing timely social awareness about the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic in a series of one-to-one counselling.

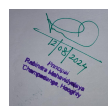
4. The Practice

The institution has this hope that such initiative helps the students to cope with the increasing stress and disruptions created in the post-COVID situation in the academic arena.

The counselling programme commenced from April, 2022 at the College campus and has continued up to March 2023. Each session was conducted via online mode between at college hours (45 minutes to 1 hour per session). The participant was to be benefited by ten straight free counselling sessions. Interested students submitted their names, contact numbers and email address to the concerned Head of the Departments for ensuring their participation in the said programme. We made sure that all the conversations between the student participants and the counsellors was kept as something ‘highly confidential’.

The programme holds out a unique promise by opening the door of ‘well-being’ for the students in the very midst of ‘ill-being’ and by helping them access mental health support services completely free of cost for developing healthy habits and mechanism to cope up during the time of crisis. This support system was found out as something rare and an event hardly thought to be organized by other academic institutions.

Instead of wide advertisement within the College through publication of notice, we resorted oral communication especially by the Head of the Departments as a way of lifting up the burden of the so-called ‘self-stigma’ or ‘public-stigma’ psychologically affecting the students and possibly keeping them away from joining into the programme in the initial phase for fear of “status reduction within friend circle,” “role restriction,” and obviously “friendship refusal.” But assuring the confidential tone of the counsellor-counselee conversation helped breaking the ice and dealing tactfully with the factor of social stigma.



5. Evidence of Success

The programme started only with 5 college students in the previous academic session though only very soon its good-effect infiltrated among the other students by those beneficiaries as well as by the constant publicity of the teachers resulting a number of students (twenty-six) enlisting their names in the programme as counselee. In the session 2022-23, the programme continued via offline mode. Feedback was taken after each session very carefully and always maintaining the confidentiality. After four months, 3 students found themselves as benefited from the session, of which four students continued up to eight free sessions for satisfactory recovery.

It is pertinent to note here that the programme carried very tiny ratio of male students as only three participated in the programme while girl students constituted the majority of participants.

It may be concluded that for the first time the mental health counselling programme reached its target to a great extent. It clearly indicates that the barrier of psycho-social stigma could be dealt with tactfully as pupils are made to become aware of the fact that mental illness is treatable and recovery is possible.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The online mode of the counselling programme created a little problem primarily due to network issue. Additionally, the programme badly needed a fixed Mental Health Counselling Cell which is a pre-requisite for maintaining privacy of the counselee. More advertisement in a strategic way must be an integral part of the programme to encourage pupils to break the silence and to do away with the self-sigma bubble or trap and to build a good mental health in an inclusive manner.



Best Practice – II

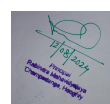
Rabindra Mahavidyalaya, Champadanga

Title of the Practice: An Initiative to Promote Financial Empowerment among the Students of the Institution

Golden Jubilee year marked the 50th anniversary of our College Rabindra Mahavidyalaya. Rabindra Mahavidyalaya was founded on 8th November in the year 1971. Hence, we completed 50 years in the year 2021. Since we were barred from attending College during this time due to the covid restrictions we celebrated the Golden Jubilee in the year 2022 on a large scale. The Inauguration of the Golden Jubilee took place in December 2021. The Golden Jubilee celebrations covered a large spectrum of events such as Rally, cultural programmes, health camps, Little Magazine fair, and various competitions in which students from the local schools participated.

The College inculcated a programme in the Golden Jubilee to promote the Financial Empowerment of the Students. The students organized a **Food and Handicrafts** stall in the Golden Jubilee programme for all four days. Financial Empowerment is a vital concept that should be introduced among the students as this promotes the ability and confidence of individuals and communities to make positive financial decisions that promote their long-term financial stability and financial goals. Financial empowerment means that a person feels in control of their money. It is stated that people who feel empowered in their financial lives experience more joy, peace, satisfaction, and pride concerning their finances.

Financial Empowerment is not only limited to means of earning, rather it indicates the control of finances a person or an individual exercises in his or her own life. Being financially healthy is not just about having enough money to cover one's expenses- it is also about feeling emotionally at ease with their finances. Hence, one of the core priorities of the teachers should be to prepare students to shape meaningful careers and thrive in a fast-changing economy. Part of realizing this vision is equipping students with financial competence and other critical life skills that they need to make informed decisions and access better opportunities. Through these efforts, teachers should support young people in learning fundamental elements of the financial world, such as saving money, budgeting, investing, managing debt, evaluating risk and reward, and developing basic entrepreneurial skills. Through such learning, the teachers also help students to develop the motivation and confidence for lifelong learning and problem-solving.

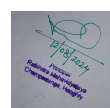


Therefore, teachers are using creativity and innovation to empower their students with financial literacy and other skills that will help them unlock greater opportunities and achieve financial resilience.

The **Food and Handicraft stalls** organized by the students in the Golden Jubilee are a perfect execution of the learnings that a student must have regarding financial planning hence promoting financial empowerment among the undergraduate students across the disciplines of the College. In the process of organizing the stalls, the students made smart financial decisions and this inculcated good habits like preparing a budget, calculating market risks, calculating profit, marketing skills, and keeping track of the sales and profit. The students were introduced to an exercise of financial planning, savings, and expenditure providing them exposure to financial empowerment in the process of organizing this event. Beyond instilling basic financial skills and habits, it was noted that the students fostered a strong sense of empowerment, self-confidence, and teamwork during the process of organizing the stalls. For girls of rural backgrounds especially financial literacy is a life-long skill that can transform their lives and the lives of their families, helping them to be better prepared for the economic growth of their community. After the completion of this event, it was noted that the students both male and female showed a gain in basic financial knowledge, and a marked increase in the level of confidence, assertiveness, and sense of agency.

In the Golden Jubilee celebration spanning four long days 8th November 2022, 9th November 2022, 10th November 2022, 11th November 2022 both the male and the female students of our College set up food and handicraft stalls. The success rate of the stalls was immense as all the students were reported to have had profit in this process. They were very happy in the end since it gave them a sense of financial empowerment and an assurance that they can earn through alternative methods and government jobs are not the only source of finding jobs or means of earning. This event increased their confidence and belief in their ability to focus on their passion and earn through it. It was open to all hence most of the people from the community that is nearby villages joined the event and enjoyed it a lot. They visited the stalls of the students and bought handicrafts as well as ate from the food stalls. It was a beautiful amalgamation and inter-mixing of the community people and the students and teachers of the College.

For any country, its youth is the biggest asset for the growth and development of the economy. Young minds are the future sailors of progress. The students need to be financially literate and



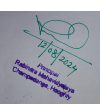
be financially empowered in the process. Financial empowerment allows individuals to take command of their assets and make the best possible decisions related to their monetary activities. It also helps in responsible decision-making which further helps an economy to achieve stability and trust.

Gender Equity

Gender Equity, defined by the **European Institute for Gender Equality**, is the “provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women, men, and all genders.” Gender equity is important because, historically societies around the world have deemed females, transgender people, and nonbinary people as “weaker” or less important than males. Today, gender equity has helped shape and change the roles and expectations of men, women, and all genders at work, at home, and in society. Our world is a better place when all people are accepted for their talents, skills, and abilities, regardless of gender. Gender equity means respecting all people without discrimination, regardless of their gender. It also means addressing gender inequalities that limit a person’s ability to access opportunities to achieve better health, education, and economic opportunity based on their gender. Gender Equity improves opportunities for all and allows people to pursue their dreams despite gender.

The Golden Jubilee Celebration celebrated in the College from 8.11.2022 to 11.11.2022 was an exemplary example where Gender Equity was promoted during various cultural events, and almost all the events that took place. Almost all the programmes that were held gave equal opportunities to all genders according to their need. Even the students who participated from the schools outside the College campus were treated equally irrespective of their gender. There were no separate categories concerning gender in the competitions or exhibitions organized by the College. Participants from all genders could equally participate and compete in the events or competitions organized by the College hence promoting and spreading a message of gender equity not only among the students of the College but also among the students in the neighboring schools.

The students of all genders participated in Food and Handicraft stalls organized by the College. This created financial empowerment for students of all genders irrespective of any bias. Since female students are usually nervous and shy, therefore, they were encouraged to participate equally along with the male students of the College. Students of both genders cooked and sold food items, hence stereotypes like cooking is an activity only meant for female



and earning is only meant for male was broken in this process. As both male and female students were seen preparing food items and selling them irrespective of their gender. The students across the gender were seen selling handicrafts and making handmade handicraft items.

Most of the cultural programmes that took place had participants from all genders and equal participation was encouraged among students of the College to promote gender equity so that they could learn to treat each other with equality and mutual respect. The literary programmes organized by the College also preached the idea of gender equity and participants across the genders were encouraged to participate in the **Little Magazine** programme. The participants who participated in the science exhibition and model presentation from the geography department also showed an equal participation from all genders. The teachers of the neighboring schools were instructed to send students of all genders to participate in the various events that took place in the College gender-based category was allowed in the events and competitions that took place in the Golden Jubilee celebration. The events like drama and karate also had participants from across the genders.

Few photographs are attached below which show Gender equity in various programmes that took place during the Golden Jubilee celebration.

It is very important to promote Gender Equity in the education system as Gender- equitable education systems empower girls and boys and promote the development of life skills- like self-management, communication, negotiation and critical thinking- that young people need to succeed. Gender Equity if practiced in educational institutions promotes fairness in education, as well as confronts stereotypes and biases that have historically limited student's potential.

