

Best Practices

Best Practice 1

1. Title of the practice: All-round Student Support

2. Context:

A large percentage of students come to study here from the remotest corners of Bengal and the adjoining states, and often belong to the lowest income groups. Many are first generation learners and receive absolutely no support from their families. These young women would not be in a position to pursue higher education if it were not for the extensive support—financial and otherwise—offered by the College.

The College takes every possible measure, starting from free boarding, education, medical facilities, to financial assistance, to ensure that these girls continue their education.

3. Objectives:

To ensure success in its mission of building a society based on equal rights and opportunities, free from all social and gender bias, the institution has a very strong student support system in place, so that no student of this College is forced to leave her studies midway for financial reasons or mental stress.

4. The Practice:

A. Financial Support.

Provided in the forms of scholarships from the following sources (in addition to the available government schemes:

- a) Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture
- b) Sarada Scholarship, Sri Sarada Math
- c) Bengal Culture Society, USA
- d) Private Donations to the Institution

Provided by the Institution, based on the needs of the students. These monetary assistances are given in the form of one-time cash awards, monthly allowances, book grants, money for stationeries and personal needs, clothes, uniforms, transport, medical emergencies, and even food.

Freeships and concessions for boarders.

Prizes and scholarships given during the Annual Function. These recognitions also act as motivations for students to excel further.

The Student Welfare Committee has a fund created by the teachers for financial assistance to deserving students. The Committee also generated a special fund for students affected by the

Amphan and Covid-related lockdown with generous contribution from ex students and well wishers. Close to a 100 students benefitted from the assistance.

The Student Welfare Committee currently has a fund that supports needy students to access the online classes by paying for monthly data and buying cell phones.

B. Academic support.

Provided through tutorial classes specially designed for both advanced and backward students.

Provided through classroom interaction with the faculty, who are aware of the shortcomings of each student individually owing to the excellent student-teacher ratio and cordial relationship.

Departmental book banks with the provision for borrowing textbooks for the entire session for students with financial constraints.

Teacher-mentors interact with the handful of students placed under them at a close personal level, monitor their academic and co-curricular performances, as well as support them emotionally. Boarders are often mentored and guided by their monastic supervisors in the hostels.

C. Health Support.

Regular health awareness and check-up camps held in the College in collaboration with Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Matri Bhavan, a premier city hospital for women.

Health Cards entitling students to free or highly subsidized medical facilities at Matri Bhavan.

Students also get the benefit of free diagnoses and medicines at the charitable Homoeopathy Dispensary run by the institution.

Doctor-on-call for medical emergencies for boarders.

First Aid facilities are readily available both in the College and hostel.

Attention is also paid to the mental well-being of the students: professional counseling facilities (group and individual) are available for students. Psychosocial counseling is also provided through stress management workshops, and gender based awareness and training sessions.

There exists an effective grievance redressal mechanism in the College. The Anti-ragging Cell, Internal Complaints Committee, RTI Cell, and the Student Welfare Committee – are all geared towards addressing and smooth redressal of specific problems faced by the students.

D. Psychological Support

The Mentor-Ward system, introduced in 2014, has proved to be a very successful method, which helps the students, cope with their problems, as well as develop a bond with their college. The mentor-mentee groups meet at least once a month for an hour. A specific slot is allotted in the timetable for this purpose. A “Know Your Ward” form is given to each mentor at the beginning of the semester. This helps her monitor their academic and co-curricular performances, as well as mentor and support them throughout their stay in the College. Mentors are also required to submit a report at the end of each semester. Besides the scheduled sessions, the mentees can approach their teacher-mentors at any point of time for assistance.

A common counseling session is arranged for each batch of students at the beginning of their first semester. Further need-based individual counseling is provided to students identified by the counselor, or recommended by teachers and mentors. The counseling sessions are currently funded by the RKSMVV Alumni Association.

E. Career Support.

Provided through the spoken English and soft skill development courses, and NET and Public Services competitive exam preparatory courses available at highly subsidized rates.

5. Impact:

Besides the benefits of the above mentioned mechanisms of student support, the students receive continuous support and exposure about the extended world from their teachers. This close and continuous process of sensitization and guidance gradually transforms the self-conscious girls into confident and self-reliant young women, prepared to face the world. It is a matter of great pride for the Institution to find its past students returning to their alma mater as responsible individuals, professionals and citizens.

6. Obstacles:

Initial hesitation on the part of the students. Also incapability to recognize the need of support, especially psychological, both on the part of the students and teachers.