

BEST PRACTICES 2020-2021

1. All-round Student Support

a) 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.

b) 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.

c) The Practice:

○ **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) Sheela Kanoria Scholarship
 - e) 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 time table 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.
 - 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.

d) 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.

e) 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.

2. Social Service and Outreach

a) The context:

The College, built after the vision and ideology of Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission, has always believed in imparting holistic education. Students here receive an inclusive value-based training that is not limited to dissemination and acquisition of knowledge, or setting up and achieving career goals. They are taught the immense value of giving back to society in all possible forms, beginning early with their induction to the various kinds of outreach programmes organized by the college and the NSS units. The twin pledges of “Be and Make” (College Motto), and “Not Me, But You” (NSS Motto), gear the students towards selfless social service.

b) Objectives:

The outreach programmes are becoming increasingly relevant in today’s world, where children, often products of nuclear families, are taught to focus solely on themselves, expected to excel in every sphere, and become more and more self centered as they join the rat race of cut throat competition. The fiercely competitive society is creating a youth blinkered to everything other than self betterment, self aggrandizement, and self promotion, with little concern for the larger society. The outreach programmes try to steer the younger generation away from the self centeredness, inculcate a strong sense of social responsibility and empathy, and direct them towards creating a society based on equality and inclusiveness.

c) The Practice:

The college has quite a few underprivileged neighbourhoods around its vicinity. The following **Community oriented Programmes** are carried out for the benefit of its members:

- Basic Education (for children between 5 and 10 years of age)
- Value Education (for girls of the 6-19 age group)
- Computer classes for local underprivileged children
- The basic needs of the students are taken care of, like books and stationeries, school uniforms, school bags, and nutritional supplements. The children are also initiated to educational tools and physical activities.
- Tailoring classes for women from the nearby slums
- Charitable dispensary in the College premises, with facility of free health check-up by two homoeopathy doctors and distribution of medicines twice a week.
- Miscellaneous welfare activities, like relief work, eye camp, medical camp etc. are also conducted round the year
- Every year during festivals, new sarees and garments are distributed among poor local ladies and children. Blankets, umbrellas, shoes, and books and stationeries are also distributed

Students of the College regularly volunteer in these programmes.

Donation Drive: Beginning September 2014, a collection campaign is organized annually to collect spare clothes, books, toys and stationeries from teachers, staff and students. These are sorted by student volunteers and distributed among the neighbouring slum dwellers. This sharing creates a sense of fellow feeling among the students, and encourages sharing of resources.

The Menstrual Health and Hygiene Awareness Programme is a unique community programme conducted by student volunteers. Every year a group of student volunteers meet teen and pre teen girls and their mothers from the neighbourhood, and conduct a Menstrual Health and Hygiene Awareness campaign with posters, presentations, and hands on training on sanitary napkin use and disposal. The workshop includes a doctor to answer the queries of the participants.

NSS: A variety of community oriented activities and awareness campaigns have been conducted by the NSS wing of the college, since its activation in August 2019. An Anti-Plastic campaign to arouse a consciousness amongst the local citizens, a Dengue awareness walk and door to door campaign, virtual Covid awareness campaigns, are some of the community oriented activities carried out by the NSS. A programme on the significance of the Republic Day was organized for the neighbourhood children on 26th January 2021.

Amphan and Yaas Relief work: During the Covid-induced lockdown, and the aftermath of the supercyclone Amphan, RKSMVV extended help and support to about 500 unprivileged families in the neighbourhood from April to August 2020. Relief, including food and essentials items worth Rs. Two lakhs, were distributed.

Organ and Blood donation Awareness and Blood donation Camps: The College organizes a Blood Donation Camp every year to instill a sense of social responsibility among the students. The number of enthusiastic donors has increased from 50 to 100 since the first of the camps was held in 2015. The camp is now organized by the NSS, the donors include students and teaching and non-teaching staff. The camp is preceded by a motivating Orientation programme on Organ and Blood Donation.

d) Obstacles faced (if any):

None. Enthusiastic participation and a lot of positive inputs are received from the students.

e) Impact of the practice:

The strongest impact of the practice is perhaps reflected in the philanthropic activities carried out by the alumni of the institution, both through the RKSMVV Alumni Association, as well as in individual capacities. Any appeal for help – monetary or otherwise – is met with enthusiastic response from RKSMVV students scattered all over the world. Numerous ex students are attached with non profit and charitable organizations, and regularly support or sponsor underprivileged students of their alma mater. The institution is proud to have created a large body of self reliant and free thinking women, responsible citizens with a strong sense of social duties.

Current students coming up with a suggestion to build a Book Bank for their underprivileged juniors, with donated text books and reference materials, is yet another evidence of success.

f) Resources: Funds, mostly donations from the stake holders and well wishers.