Best Practice 3

Title of the Practice:

Promoting Women Education: Initiative to Encourage Regular Girl Student Users of the College Library

Objectives of the Practice:

Libraries have supported institutional initiatives in widening access, public engagement, academic entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and student well-being. They have become campus champions for open research and decolonising the curriculum. But to secure their future on campus they must switch from a transactional to a relational model of librarianship. In this regard, Gushkara Mahavidyalaya, affiliated to the university of Burdwan and established in 1965 in the semi-urban town Guskara, aims to foster ample access for the girl students to its central library keeping in mind the following issues: gender equality, empowerment of the girl student and the dissemination of a deeper awareness about the requirement of library work.

The Context:

Girls belonging to economically underprivileged sections of society often lack access to quality education. In our college more than 50% of students are female. The number of female students is steadily increasing because of the availability of a number of schemes and scholarships such as Kanyasri Prakalpa initiated by Government of West Bengal. The college has arranged a special initiative to encourage girl student users of the library. The library of this college aims to provide gender sensitization ambience for all its students – female and male. The librarian as well as the college authority are aware of the various challenges during their library visit. That will motivate not only the girl students but also the entire student community across gender lines.

The Practice:

In many parts of India, especially in rural areas, access to quality educational resources maybelimited.Librariesinhighereducationinstitutionsofferawiderangeofbooks, journals,

research papers, and digital resources that can significantly enhance a girl student's knowledge base. Our college has a well-equipped library with more than 37 thousand books, access to e-journal and journals like *Economic and Political Weekly*, *Current Science*, *Yojana*, *Socrates*, *Anustup*, *Journal of Contemporary Thought* and so on which positively impacts a girl student's academic performance. The resources and materials available in libraries enable them to excel in examinations, assignments, and projects.
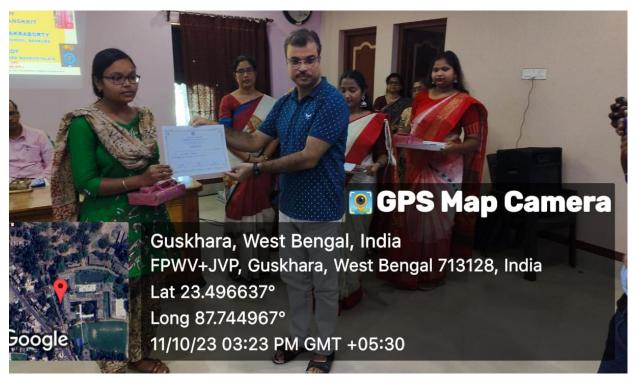
Every year, one girl student (both from UG and PG section) is selected as the best library user awardee on the basis of the statistical data, accession of books, reading aptitude of the student, utilization of library resources and discipline. The names of the best library users since 2021 are mentioned below:

Monisha Ghosh, a student of B.A. semester VI of Sanskrit Honours got the prize for regular and maximum visit to library in the academic year 2021-2022.
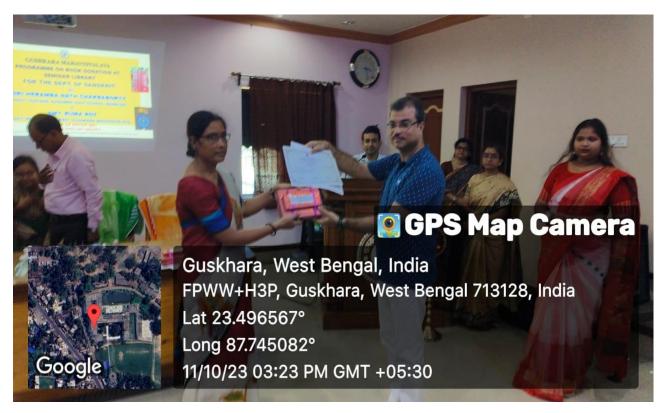
Sanchita Ainch, a post graduate student of Bengali of semester IV got the prize for regular and maximum visit to library in the academic year 2022-2023.

Despite the positive impact of library work on a girl student's academic journey, there are several constraints and limitations prevalent in the context of India's higher education system. In some conservative communities, girls may face restrictions or bias against accessing libraries, particularly during certain hours. These cultural barriers can limit their engagement with library workandhindertheiracademicgrowth.Indiastillfacesgenderdisparitiesinaccesstoeducation.

Despite efforts to promote inclusivity, girls might encounter societal prejudices that discourage them from engaging in academic activities beyond the classroom. While digital resources are becoming increasingly important, there is a significant digital divide in India, with many students lacking access to computers or the internet. This divide affects their ability to leverage online resources available through libraries. Some girl students might not fully realize the potential benefits of library work or may not receive adequate guidance on how to effectively utilize library resources for their academic progress. Balancing library work with academic commitments, extracurricular activities, and household responsibilities can be challenging for some girl students, especially in rural areas where gender roles are more traditional.
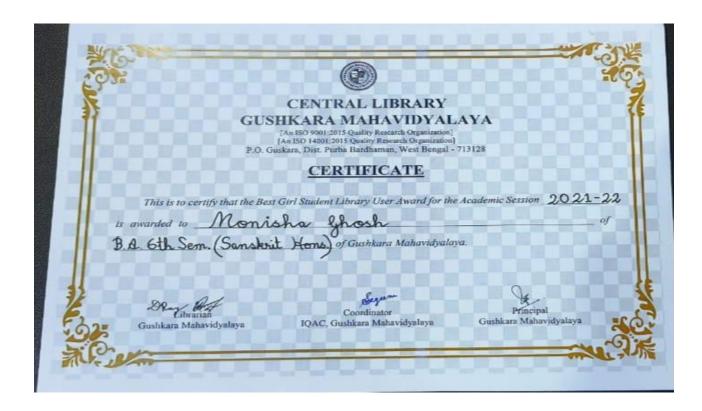
Sanchita Ainch is receiving certificate as best library user

GPS Map Camera

Guskhara, West Bengal, India
FPWW+H3P, Guskhara, West Bengal 713128, India
Lat 23.496567°
Long 87.745082°
11/10/23 03:23 PM GMT +05:30

Prof Monimala Mondal is receiving certificate on behalf of Monisha Ghosh

CENTRAL LIBRARY
GUSHKARA MAHAVIDYALAYA
[An ISO 9001:2015 Quality Research Organization]
[An ISO 14001:2015 Quality Research Organization]
P.O. Guskara, Dist. Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal - 713128

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Best Girl Student Library User Award for the Academic Session 2022-23
is awarded to *Sanchita Ainch* of
PG Bengali 4th Semester of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya.

Librarian
Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

Coordinator
IQAC, Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

Principal
Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

CENTRAL LIBRARY
GUSHKARA MAHAVIDYALAYA

[An ISO 9001:2015 Quality Research Organization]
[An ISO 14001:2015 Quality Research Organization]
P.O. Guskara, Dist. Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal - 713128

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Best Girl Student Library User Award for the Academic Session _2021-22_

is awarded to _Monisha Ghosh_ of

B.A. 6th Sem. (Sanskrit Hons.) of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya.

Librarian
Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

Coordinator
IQAC, Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

Principal
Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

Library Attendance Register

Girl students at our library

Evidence of Success:

Active encouragement from the library and college authorities instills a sense of confidence among the girl students who are selected for their dedication to library work. Library work encourages students to develop independent learning habits. As girls often face societal pressures and expectations, having a supportive environment like a library allows them to explore subjects of interest, conduct research, and pursue self-directed studies without external interruptions. Libraries are essential hubs for research activities. Engaging in library work exposes girl students to research methodologies, information retrieval techniques, and critical thinking skills, which are essential for academic success and future careers.

This initiative has positive impact on disciplined library use, free interaction with the library staff and authority, and transforms the potential users into active users of library. After the ceremony of Best Library User Award, the number of visitors, especially the girl students has been increasing. In session 2021-22 1387 girl students regularly visited our library. The next session witnessed a significant increase in the number. In session 2022-23 1756 girl students used the library.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LIBRARY USAGE BY THE GIRL STUDENTS

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
	No. of girls	No. of girls	No. of girls
July	9	41	78
August	2	164	99
September	0	132	162
October	1	65	259
November	145	197	306
December	600	175	275
January	2	92	
February	117	118	
March	144	144	
April	141	81	
May	183	108	
June	43	439	
Total	1387	1756	1179 (upto December 2022)

20. 01.24.

Librarian
Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

LIBRARY

Problems Encountered and Resource Required:

Because of problems related to transport it often becomes difficult to attract the students to the library after 3pm on a working day. They are in a hurry to go back home. The college is trying its best to encourage the students to visit the library frequently. We intend to enhance the number of girl student users by increasing the college funds intended for this purpose. Moreover, the access to the following open e - resources at present available in the library of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya can be provided to the students for the advancement of knowledge: 1) Open Textbook Library 2) Online Periodicals Repository 3) NCERT Books 4) *Cambridge University Press* 5) *Oxford University Press* 6) *Taylor and Francis* 7) *JSTOR* 8) *NDL* 9) *World Digital Library* 10) *DOAJ* 11) *DOAB* 12) Worldwide Science Sources13) Vidya-Mitra.

Best Practice – 4

1. Title of the Practice

Cultivating Empathy for the Underprivileged: An Annual Initiative by the Students of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya

2. Objectives of the Practice

The key objective of this practice is to enable our students to cultivate and express empathy for individuals and groups belonging to underprivileged sections of their immediate social environment. Through this practice our students learn to undertake socially relevant initiatives for the benefit of fellow citizens such as people who are differently abled or people who are homeless. Based on humanitarian values and the basic principles of philanthropy, this practice will enable our students to become socially aware and responsible citizens by encouraging them to engage with contemporary social issues in a constructive manner.

3. The Context

Our social milieu includes several sections or groups of people who are less privileged than others. They include, for instance, the differently abled people and the people belonging to economically backward segments. The presence of homeless people is clearly visible in public places like railway station platforms. Despite their visible presence, ordinary individuals, engrossed in their daily activities, often fail to pay attention to the predicament and needs of these marginalized people. It is, however, ethically important for us to respond to problems like poverty, disability and disease. As young citizens, our students need to cultivate a sense of social responsibility and compassion for those who need help. They should learn to organize and participate in welfare activities that aim to improve the lives of impoverished and underprivileged people. This ethical imperative based on the harsh realities of our social context has been foundational to the humanitarian initiative undertaken by our students.

4. The Practice

The students of our college enthusiastically organize a special annual charity event that focuses on helping the people who live on the margins of our society. It is organized and conducted primarily by student volunteers from the Department of English, Gushkara Mahavidyalaya. The initiative is funded by monetary contributions from the teachers, students and staff belonging to various departments including the Department of English.

A group of students from the Department has formed a philanthropic group which they have named 'Abegi'. The Bengali word 'abeg' can be translated as 'emotion'. The name 'Abegi', therefore, denotes a state of mind that is characterized by emotions such as compassion and empathy. The goal of this group and its efforts is to provide emotional and material assistance to the people who urgently require help.

On 25th of December, 2018 and again on 25th of December, 2019 a group of student volunteers organized a Winter Donation Programme for the people, for whom the railway station floor is the bed and the sky is the roof. In early morning our student volunteers gathered at Gushkara railway station with all arrangements in order to serve the needy. There they distributed blankets. There is no better gift than providing warmth to the needy in winter. Moreover, they distributed chocolates and cakes among those children who live in the station surroundings and slums. Afterwards, they left Gushkara to reach their next destination at Bardhaman and continued the rest of the program there. At Bardhaman railway station they distributed cakes, biscuits and chocolates among children who live there. These children belong to impoverished homeless families who permanently live on the railway platforms. Needless to say, the gifts made them immensely happy. Because of poverty, some of these children are forced to beg or work. For them, empathy is a rare gift. Our students then visited a nearby slum where they again distributed cakes, biscuits and chocolates among children. Our students befriended the platform dwellers and spent the entire morning with them.

The Covid 19 pandemic devastated lives and livelihoods in the year 2020-21. On 15 August, 2020 a group of student volunteers organized a programme to spread awareness about Covid 19. In villages of Bhatar Gram Panchayat they distributed masks, gloves and sanitizer among people who were financially incapable of buying such things. Again, on 25th of December, 2020 our student volunteers organized a Winter Donation Programme for the individuals and families who live on the railway platforms in Gushkara and Bardhaman and in the nearby slums. They distributed blankets, chocolates and cakes. Next year on 25th of December our students distributed thirty blankets and over 120 cakes and chocolates among those who live in the station surroundings.

On 25th of December, 2022 a group of student volunteers organized a series of activities that expressed their genuine compassion for underprivileged children. The day began with a visit to Najrul Smriti Drishtihin Vidyalaya, a school for blind children situated in Gungpur, Purba Bardhaman. Our students befriended the blind residents of the school and spent the entire morning and afternoon with them. Not surprisingly, the children immensely enjoyed their friendly presence. They sang patriotic songs and played musical instruments beautifully. Keeping their musical capabilities in mind, our students gifted them a guitar and a couple of monochords. The musical session was followed by lunch arranged by the student volunteers. Afterwards, our students went back to Bardhaman railway station where they distributed cakes, biscuits and chocolates among children who live there.

We are happy to note that students of other Departments are now organizing similar initiatives. Along with their teachers, the students of the Department of Nutrition visited an orphanage named Siliguri Bhawna Society in Siliguri on 4th November, 2023. On 7th November they visited Hope Home Welfare Society, an Old Age Home situated in Kurseong. The initiative was funded by monetary contributions from the teachers, students and staff belonging to various departments.

 Again, on 6th January, 2024 the student volunteers of Department of English organized a donation programme at Guskara and Bardhaman railway stations.

One of the central purposes of higher education in our country is to create ideal citizens by disseminating certain moral values including altruism. The annual philanthropic event organized by our students reflects and upholds those ethical values.

5. Evidence of Success

The activities organized by our students at social welfare organizations, at railway stations and at the slums substantially contributed to the emotional well-being of a large number of underprivileged people including children. This is evidenced by the manner in which they responded. Besides, these efforts have enriched our students morally. They have proved that they have the desire and the ability to organize constructive social welfare activities on their own.

These results indicate that higher educational institutions can play a significant role in stimulating moral values and a vigorous sense of social responsibility among the young citizens of the nation. Clearly, they can create a better world through their energetic and enthusiastic interventions.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The desire or the ability to help others is not uniformly present in all students. While the majority of the students are enthusiastic about philanthropic efforts, some of them may lack motivation. Through our experiences we have realized that the task of motivating them is a possible one. Through meaningful conversations our teachers have been able to encourage these students to get involved in this initiative. At present the annual philanthropic event organized by our students is entirely funded by contributions from students, teachers and other members of the staff. We intend to broaden the scope of this endeavour by increasing the funds available to our student volunteers.

Donation Programme by Department of English (2020-2021)

Donation Programme by Department of English (2021-2022)

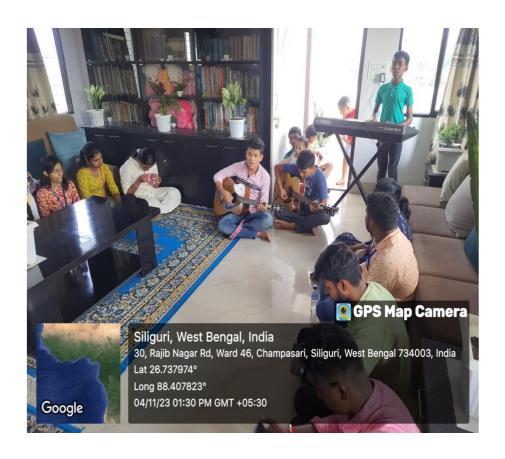Donation Programme by Department of English (2022-2023)

Donation Programme by Department of Nutrition (2023-2024)

Makai Bari Tea Garden, West Bengal, India
Makai Bari Tea Garden, West Bengal 734217, India
Lat 26.847922°
Long 88.269385°
04/11/23 04:37 PM GMT +05:30

Siliguri, West Bengal, India
30, Rajib Nagar Rd, Ward 46, Champasari, Siliguri, West Bengal 734003, India
Lat 26.737974°
Long 88.407823°
04/11/23 01:30 PM GMT +05:30
GPS Map Camera

Rohini Tea Garden, West Bengal, India
Unnamed Road, Rohini Tea Garden, West Bengal 734217, India
Lat 26.849726°
Long 88.289232°
04/11/23 04:25 PM GMT +05:30
GPS Map Camera

Donation Programme by Department of English (2023-2024)

DONATION PROGRAMME

DONATION PROGRAMME

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