

Title of the Practice: Gender Sensitization

Objectives of the Practice

- To instill sense of equality, justice, mutual respect and accountability among the students of both the genders.
- To generate awareness regarding equality in law, social system and democratic activities.
- To provide an integrated and inter-disciplinary approach to understand the social and cultural constructions of gender that shapes the experiences of women and men in society.
- To advocate and ensure same personal freedom for men and women, protection against all sorts of aggression and exploitation.
- Equality of men and women with regard to social, economic and political representation and participation.

The context

Our College takes pride in being one of the safest and best sensitized HEI of the district as far as gender equality and safety is concerned. The ratio of male and female staff as well as that of male and female students speaks volumes to authenticate this claim of ours. Sustainable development relies on ending discrimination toward women and providing equal opportunities to all in the field of education and employment. Usually, women are treated differently and unequal in comparison to men in career, home and society. Gender discrimination exists in all walks of life and every part of society.

Gender sensitization aims at making students and staff gender sensitive through modification of behavior by raising awareness of gender equality concerns. This can be achieved by conducting various sensitization campaigns, trainings, workshops, programs, competitions and activities etc. with an aim to provide a harmonious and fertile environment for all students to excel physically, mentally, intellectually and emotionally upholding ethics and values. It is necessary to change their perspective about gender and create safe and secure environment

The Practice

The College has an active and well-equipped Women Development Cell that addresses all the gender related issues through a number of awareness generating programmes, events, extension lectures and competitions. The Cell gets financial assistance as Women Cell Grant from the State Government. The Development Cell also looks into various special needs and safety requirements of the girl students and is always prepared for their assistance and counseling.

The College facilitates girl students with common room, dedicated girls wash rooms, water-coolers, parking facility, recreational gadgets and facilities in the girls common room, sanitary pads vending machine and incinerators etc.

A provision of health check up and guidance on health, nutrition and hygiene under the supervision of the doctors and qualified medical teams is a regular feature. In addition to this the College also has Internal Complaints Committee on the UGC guidelines to take care of all the issues of sexual harassment at workplace for girls and female staff.

Women Development Cell organizes special Self-Defense workshops, Yoga and aerobic classes for the girls. Girls are motivated to participate and enroll in NCC and NSS wings of the College, as it strengthens and develops their confidence and leadership qualities. Special efforts are also made through Legal Literacy Cell to familiarize them with their constitutional rights and safeguards.

Special Skill Development workshops are also planned and organized for the overall development and empowerment of girl students of the College. College is also inspired by the Govt. Scheme of like "Beti Bachao Beti Padho". All the committees of the college initiate activities time and again to make our students sensitive about this issue.

Evidence of Success

Our cultural beliefs reinforce the idea of acceptable behavior of males and females. This includes various socializing agents like parents, teachers, media, etc. Legal Literacy Cell of the college organizes lectures of advocates on gender issues. These lecturers are really informative for our students and sensitize them towards the other gender. Students are counseled to treat their class mates equally and they are given evidence by their teachers who treat their students equally. College teachers keep close eye on the students to monitor their behavior.

Although, social values and norms are not static, deep- rooted gender and social roles can be modified over time. We can also vouch that gender roles are not static. They differ with culture, society and historical periods. Government policies and initiatives play the role of a torch bearer in breaking gender stereotypes. They coax people to examine their personal beliefs and attitudes and question the realities of both sexes. This is a success of gender equality.

Problems encountered and Resources Required

Challenges occur when we try to break stereotypical views of culturally and socially constructed roles.

First of all, its women themselves who justify their assigned roles and subjugated status. They are wary of asserting their own agency while making meaningful decisions of their lives. They have internalized their roles and it becomes very difficult to coax them to see through the mechanism of patriarchal forces and their power play. So the biggest challenge is to change their psychology and remove their mental barriers.

Although our college tries its best to maintain a balance between the genders and provide a safe and secure environment for female staff and students, the intimidating patriarchal forces and setup of our society do not allow them to voice their grievances in the public, as it is the victim who is victimized and the honor and reputation of the female which is at stake. The backlash of asserting themselves is

rather tremendous and humiliating. This prevents them from making their voice heard and the wrongdoings registered.

We need a transparent, speedy and sound judicial system that could assure women and girls of fair and timely justice vindicating their honour and social prestige.

The resources required for this are definitely financial initiatives and mental training. Courses of Gender studies should be introduced at the school level itself and should be taught in the college as a compulsory subject. Gender champions should be rewarded socially. More programs, trainings and workshops should be organised. Experts on the subject should be invited to hold interactive sessions and psychological counseling for staff and students.

The gender crime victims could also be invited to share their experiences with the staff and students so that the latter could empathize with the victims and get sensitized in a better way. Visit to rehabilitation shelters and centers would also be crucial for the sensitization of both the genders.

Circulation of Govt. published reports on gender crimes among the students and staff would also play a vital role in sensitizing them. So, more financial resources and initiatives are required to reach the desired level of satisfaction in this regard.