

Best Practice 2

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 may be limited. Libraries in higher education institutions offer a wide range of books, 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.

Each year one regular girl student is selected and actively encouraged by the central library of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya. She is identified on the basis of the frequency of her library visits. In near future we will introduce a scheme whereby the best girl student user will be given an award in recognition of her dedication to library work.

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 work and hinder their academic growth. India still faces gender disparities in access to education. 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.

Due to Covid 19 pandemic the college remained closed during 2020-21. Therefore, the students could not regularly visit the library. Occasionally, especially before the online examinations they were allowed to visit the library.

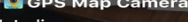
Evidence of Success:

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.

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 Sources* 13) *Vidya-Mitra*.

Sl. No.	Class	Section	2021	2022	2023
272	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
273	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
274	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
275	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
276	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
277	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
278	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
279	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
280	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
281	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
282	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
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298	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
299	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023
300	1st Sem	Math	2021	2022	2023


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