

7.3.1: Institutional Distinctiveness: Contributing to Community Development by making the College Playground Available to Sports Enthusiasts of the Local Community

Gushkara Mahavidyalaya was established in 1965 with almost 7.3 acre land with a well-designed playground occupying a substantial space within the institutional premises. Our college provides 24 x 7 security to the playground and to the academic and administrative buildings. The playground is regularly utilized by the students and teachers of the Department of Physical Education. However, it is not confined only to the students and teachers of the said institution. Rather it has been made available to the children and people belonging to the local community for playing various kinds of games like basketball, volleyball, kho-kho, cricket, football and so on. The College Play Ground includes one basketball ground, one handball ground, one Kho-Kho ground, one volleyball ground, a multi-gym, cricket and football fields and open galleries. After college hours, sports enthusiasts of the local community are allowed to practice or to organize tournaments in the playground. By making its infrastructure accessible and available to members of the local community, our college has created a unique relationship with the community.

Play is the key to physical, mental, intellectual and social well being of students. Of late, child psychologists, doctors and other health specialists have argued that playgrounds could assist in children's social, emotional and physical development. Playgrounds play an essential role in fostering collaboration. They promote community awareness by helping children build bonds with each other. Additionally, while cooperating with other children at a playground, they can build their leadership and communication skills, which are essential to participating in the community as responsible citizens. Playing outside can build children's connection to their senses — new sights, smells, textures and sounds can help build nerve connections in the brain. One benefit of investing in a playground is that it can help support and grow children's immune systems. Physical exercise has a host of benefits for children such as improving cardio respiratory health, building strong bones, increasing muscle development, reducing anxiety and stress etc.

With infrastructural support from the college, a number of individuals devoted to sports regularly provide sports training and coaching in the college grounds. Manikeswar Karmakar (b.1947), an ex-staff of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya and a local inhabitant has been coaching local students (mostly from other institutions) in this institutional playground since 1980s without any remuneration or fees. He is a member of "Gushkara Zonal Sports Association" (1981) which is affiliated to "Burdwan District Sports Association and Volleyball Basketball Association." He serves as a coach to the players of basketball, kho-kho, football and athletics all thorough the year. Each year, a team of "Gushkara Zonal Sports Association" participates in the basketball

league organized by “Burdwan District Sports Association.” Furthermore, he organized many tournaments with participation from the school pupils until pandemic period in our college ground. Interestingly, his coaching groups include a large number of female participants from surrounding areas.

Trishan Mal, who has been a trainee under Mankieswar Karmakar, is now playing for the Kolkata Basketball Club. He was also selected three times in all India University level Basketball Competition. Nisha Shaw, Monica Sahani and Sangita Mistry took part in inter-district basketball competition. Basketball is practiced in our college premises with the guidance of Mr. Karmakar. For the academic year 2019-20, the trainees who have been trained under the supervision of Mr. Karmakar are listed here. From the category of girls the trainees are - Soumi Mukherjee, Diya ghosh, Krishna Mallick, Mania Sahani, Koyel Halder, Sangita Mistry, Nisha Shaw and Sumana Mondal. And from the category of boys the names of the trainees are - Swastik Sakhari, Navaneel Banerjee, Deb Kumar Pal, Dipak Mal, Samik Seikh, Dharamjit Paswan, Debyeet Halder and Mainak Banerjee. The data of the academic year 2020-21 shows the name of girl players only: Subarna Mondal, Koyel Patra, Indira Mondal, Partna Dey, Ankita Bhakat, Sananda Saha, Kamrunnesha Khatun, Neha Sahani, Hamiba Ansari and Sanjana Sharma.

The basketball players of the academic year 2021-22 & 2022-23 are mentioned here: Tandrima Goap, Priyanka Khayun, Anindita Dey, Mandira Pramanik, Kasturi Mukherjee, Bristi Das, Disha Dey, Adrija Bairagya, Rimi Samaddar and Raisinha Mukti.

Besides basketball our college playground is also used for other sports like kho-kho, a traditional game of India. All the players are being well-trained under the guidance of Mr Manikeswar Karmakar. The players for the academic year 2021-22 are mostly girls: Susmita Hembram, Moti das, Riya Mondal, Anjali Biswas, Tanushree Gayen, Mangali Hembram, Shrabani Murmu, Payel Khatun, Amina Khatun and Riya Goldar. During the academic year 2022-23 the trainees were - Tandrima Goap, Priyanka Khayun, Anindita Dey, Mandira Pramanik, Kasturi Mukherjee, Bristi Das, Disha Dey, Adrija Bairagya, Rimi Samaddar and Raisinha Mukti.

Apart from Manikeswar Karmakar, Mr. Binoy Roy, another local inhabitant has been coaching football to the children of Gushkara and its surrounding areas in our college playground. He organizes a football tournament each year on 15th August, the day of Indian Independence with various football teams in our playground.

The playground of Gushkara Mahavidyalaya has also been provided to Gushkara Bishan Athletic Club (2012) for organizing Dues Ball T-20 Cricket League each year during the months of January-February since 2017 with the cricket teams of surrounding districts. It is conducted under the supervision of Mr. Saugata Gupta (b.1980), the secretary of Gushkara Bishan Athletic Club.

Thus, Gushkara Mahavidyalaya has contributed substantially to community development by offering free access to its playground. Our college is actively encouraging the local community

to cultivate healthy sports activities in the outdoor playground. This approach which is distinctive to our college has improved quality of life in the community with regard to issues like recreation and physical and mental health.

Games, sports activities and tournaments held in our college ground after college hours





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