

GOKHALE MEMORIAL GIRLS' COLLEGE



Gender Sensitization Action Plan

Gender sensitization is the basic requirement to understand the sensitive needs of a particular gender, be it female, male or transgender. It helps us to examine our personal attitudes and beliefs and question the realities that we thought we knew. Educational institutions can be instrumental in instilling thoughts and correcting perceptions (if need be). They help in developing a more democratic society capable of changing attitudes into accepting gender equality as a fundamental social value.

The flag bearer of Gokhale Memorial Girls' College (GMGC), Founder-Principal Mrs. Sarala Ray, the reformer and educationist, ardent disciple of freedom fighter and visionary Gopal Krishna Gokhale, believed that no social and/or political reform can be worthwhile without female education. It is the recognition of the roles played by both men and women and addressing their needs through policies and institutional mechanisms which are crucial in determining levels of development of the society and the nation.

GMGC is an all-women institution whose first mission is to impart a sound holistic education to the students, not only to empower them but also enable them to become confident, self-reliant and responsible citizens. GMGC is committed to gender sensitization which is reflected in the programmes it has undertaken in the past few years. Gender sensitisation begins on the very first day when a student enters GMGC and takes part in the orientation programme which guides her through the myriad lines of student activity, creating awareness

about the history and legacy of the College in empowering women since the colonial era to the contemporary times.

In Gokhale Memorial Girls' College, the staff consists of both male and female employees. Gender sensitization thus aims at sensitizing both staff and students about citizenship rights, demeanour at work place and prevention of sexual harassment.

Teachers' commitment is a key factor in the promotion of gender equality in the institution. As the college has a multi-lingual, multi-religious student mass, the importance of using gender sensitive pedagogy is a must. Teachers are strategically positioned to act as agents of change in order to achieve gender equality, especially through what they teach, how they teach and how they role model their concerns, attitudes, beliefs and practices in the classroom and beyond.

The objectives are -

- *To instil positive values so as to erase biases in the young developing minds to help them progress towards a fair and unbiased society.*
- *To create awareness regarding gender discrimination, violence against women, deprivation of women, rights of transgender persons and other issues through lectures, seminars, talks, workshops, debates, showing films and documentaries etc. and familiarize students with their constitutional rights and safeguards.*
- *To facilitate a gender-sensitive environment enabling members of the teaching and non-teaching staff to maximize their potential.*
- *To undertake policy initiatives for providing equal opportunities to staff and students.*
- *To create an environment in which the students and the staff jointly participate in college actions and activities with an open mind.*
- *To create a transparent environment of discussion, dialogue, tolerance and solution and work towards modification of behaviour by raising awareness of gender equality concerns.*
- *To deal with cases of sexual / psychological/emotional/physical harassment objectively and as much as is possible for an academic institution.*

The Institution's plan is such that girls understand women's issues and learn how to deal with them effectively. It is a training of minds that helps them throughout life. The dimension of

gender discrimination is vast but through these awareness programmes and mentorship we find a solution by teaching them that it is alright to have problems, that we may be biologically different from boys but at the end of the day our 'needs' are the same as our counterparts. We teach them how to address and tackle differences and complicated situations of life. A gender sensitive environment enables girls to maximize their potential as it builds self-respect, confidence and self-esteem. The institute's observances and extension activities are designed to cater to these needs and various committees are formed and cooperation between staff and students is encouraged. The institution promotes gender equality through various policy initiatives undertaken for providing equal opportunities to staff and students. To fulfil these objectives, GMGC has developed and implemented a well-planned inclusive strategy as enunciated below-

- Organizing, seminars, talks, workshops, competitions addressing gender issues
- Encouraging students to become members of the three student fora, viz, Social Awareness Club, Cultural Club and Literary Club.
- Encouraging Student Presentations which help in enhancing preparedness.
- Encouraging students to make literary and other contributions to the College Magazine "Miscellany" and the Literary Club magazine "Monochrome".
- Encouraging students to participate in community, social and environmental work conducted by Calcutta Ekatma and Mother Earth Foundation with whom the College has MoUs.
- Encouraging students to participate in social outreach activities conducted every year.
- Encouraging students to participate in extra-curricular activities including competitions organized by the college and other institutions.
- To organize Freshers' Welcome, Class Farewell, Teacher's Day on their own
- To participate in important events such as College foundation Day, International Women's Day, Republic Day, National youth Day, Parakram divas and Independence Day.Celebrations
- Giving opportunity to students to participate as teams to represent the college in Mock Youth Parliament and to act as College ambassadors in various workshops and events organized in other institutions.

- Encouraging students to participate in every cultural event held in the college and showcase their talents. .
- Encouraging students to plan and execute ideas in the College Exhibition.
- Encouraging students to enrol in NSS Unit-1 and the NCC wing (in collaboration with Muralidhar College, Kolkata).
- Offering several value-added courses to enhance their employability
- Encouraging students to participate in physical fitness activities
- Facilitating career counselling and recruitment through workshops, entrance tests, and guidance for competitive exams both on campus and outside through the Placement Cell
- Mentorship by faculty and psycho-social support by an external expert to help students develop life skills, soft skills and personality and self-esteem.
- Providing offsite hostel facility in collaboration with YWCA.
- Facilitating enrolment in employability-enhancing distance courses of Swayam-NPTEL twice a year.

Several other accompanying policies are as follows:

- An Anti-ragging Cell been set up in accordance with the Government rules and deal with cases of complaints where face to face interaction and counselling resolve issues.
- The Committee of Internal Complaints which is an all-encompassing committee to look into the problems, grievances and complaints of the students, the teaching staff and the non-teaching staff, plays an important role in ensuring equal opportunity for all and resolution of grievances with utmost care and confidentiality.
- Teaching strategies that are reflective as well as objective are planned and mentoring strengthens student-teacher relationship and aids in filling loopholes (if any) so that work towards 'gender mainstreaming' is effective.
- Gender sensitization requirements are periodically reviewed by the faculty members of Social Awareness Club and events are organized every year to promote an environment of gender justice. For example, lectures and seminars are arranged to sensitize students and staff in the matter of the 'transgender', lectures on domestic violence and sexual harassment, constitutional rights and safeguards are organized, ex-students are invited to share their life experiences.
- The staff of the college is directed by the HOI to follow the College Codes of Conduct and to act in a manner appropriate for an all-women's institution.

Besides promoting equality for all, the College undertakes takes strict policies for ensuring safety and security of the girl students and also the female staff -

- College recruits women security personnel from a reputed security service provider, NIS Management Limited. There is an 8-hour long security arrangement at the entry

gate. Students can enter only on showing their Identity Cards. Trespassing is strictly prohibited and monitored by the security positioned at the entry gate. The personnel also keep a close watch on the entry and exit of individuals such as guardians, vendors, service personnel, visiting students from other institutions and the like.

- CCTV cameras are installed at vantage points keep a 24-hour vigil on all activities and movements in the premises, thus enhancing the safety and security of staff and students in the College.
- Female support staff keep vigil on every floor of the two college buildings and assist the girl students in every way required.
- Office maintains first-aid kits, masks and sanitizers for maintenance of health safety
- Sanitary napkin-vending machines are installed in front of washrooms in both buildings.
- Wheel chair is kept in working condition to facilitate movement of the sick/ailing or physically impaired students and staff.
- Disabled-friendly student washrooms have been constructed.

Gender discrimination against girls is rampant and due to fear of abuse and exploitation many women remain silent and suppressed and even as adults 'die with a scream in their throats'. The College takes initiatives to teach the young minds to stand up against all odds and trust their own voice. Gender sensitization programmes have instilled confidence and self-reliance in girls, moulding their personalities in such a way that they have emerged as strong well-rounded personalities who have stood the test of time. As such they have contributed to society in their chosen field of activity be it in the police services, corporate, administration, sports, politics, education et al. Gender sensitization in future will concentrate on building awareness on loss of human resource potential due to gender discrimination and inequality.

