



ESTD.-1963

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# HARIMOHAN GHOSE COLLEGE

J-206 & 208A, PAHARPUR ROAD, GARDEN REACH, KOLKATA-700024

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## BEST PRACTICE 1

### 1. TITLE :

#### **SANGAM: THE CONFLUENCE OF ALL FAITHS PROMOTING RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND HARMONY**

### 2. OBJECTIVES:

The objective is to create an environment that fosters secularism and cultural exposure that creates an avid sense of awareness between individuals from different backgrounds.

The aim is to create a body of students who are socially and intellectually aware and rationally robust.

They in turn will be citizens with a secular and liberal worldview regardless of the limited resources available to them due to their extreme financial constraints.

Their cultural diversity will become a boom to their personal growth as they tread towards broadening their horizons.

### 3. THE CONTEXT:

In the time when the religious tolerance has taken a backseat and resulted in turmoil and anguish among the folks, HMG ensures a space for students with budding minds.


Notwithstanding the religious sensitivity and the fundamentalist undercurrents in context of their immediate neighbourhoods, they harbour a spirit of mutual respect and humanistic thought regarding participation in rites and rituals of events like Saraswati Puja, Eid, Iftaar parties with the joy of festivities.

### 4. THE PRACTICE

At Harimohan Ghose College, the embodiment of secularism and cultural integration transcends mere practice and becomes an integral part of the students' daily lives. Situated in a community with a substantial population of minorities, predominantly Muslims, the college is a beacon of unity and mutual respect.

#### **Saraswati Puja Celebration**

Despite their religious backgrounds, students eagerly participate in Saraswati Puja, a Hindu festival dedicated to the goddess of knowledge and arts. This celebration begins with a deep dive into understanding the significance and rituals associated with the festival. Students from Muslim backgrounds take active roles in decorating the campus, preparing the idol of Saraswati, arranging flowers, and setting up the altar. They participate in the ritual chanting of

  
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mantras, offering prayers, and distributing prasada (sanctified food). This involvement is not superficial; it reflects their genuine respect for their peers' traditions and a thirst for knowledge beyond textbooks.

### **Islamic Festivities**

In return, Hindu students and those from other religious backgrounds immerse themselves in the celebration of Islamic festivals such as Iftar during Ramadan and Eid. They join their Muslim friends in fasting for a day to better understand the experience, and help organize the Iftar feast, ensuring a diverse spread of traditional dishes. During Eid, the college grounds are transformed into a vibrant hub of cultural exchange, with students donning traditional attire, participating in communal prayers, and sharing the joy of the occasion with all.

### **Promoting Secularism and Liberalism**

The active participation of students in these diverse festivities goes beyond mere attendance. It signifies a profound understanding and acceptance of different religious practices, fostering a secular and liberal outlook. This environment encourages students to view themselves as human beings first, transcending religious identities. They recognize the importance of unity, mutual respect, and the collective pursuit of knowledge and personal growth.

### **Building Solidarity and Human Values**

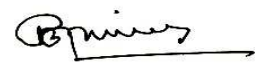
Through these practices, students learn to value education, empathy, and solidarity over religious differences. They demonstrate a remarkable sense of cohesion, showing that mutual respect and cooperation can bridge any divide. The college community becomes a microcosm of an ideal society where individuals coexist harmoniously, celebrating their shared humanity above all else.

These practices have instilled in students the belief that their collective identity as learners and global citizens is paramount. They have shown that with understanding and respect, diverse communities can come together to create a cohesive, supportive, and enlightened society.

## **5. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS**

The success of this inclusive practice is evident through several indicators:

- **Increased Cultural Awareness:** Students have shown a marked increase in their understanding and appreciation of different religious practices. Surveys conducted post-festival celebrations reveal a high level of cultural awareness and respect among the students.

  
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- Enhanced Community Spirit: The collaborative efforts in organizing and celebrating these festivals have strengthened the sense of community within the college. This is reflected in the improved camaraderie and cooperation among students from diverse backgrounds.
- Academic and Extracurricular Excellence: The inclusive environment has contributed to the overall development of students, leading to better academic performance and active participation in extracurricular activities. The college has seen a rise in students engaging in cultural clubs and societies.
- Positive Recognition: The college has received accolades from local and regional educational bodies for its exemplary practice in promoting secularism and cultural integration.

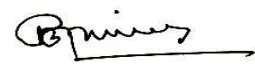
## 6. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED

While the practice has been largely successful, there were initial challenges that needed to be addressed:

- Unfamiliarity with Rituals: Many students, particularly those from the Muslim community, were initially unfamiliar with the rites and rituals of Hindu festivals such as Saraswati Puja. This lack of knowledge posed a challenge in effectively organizing the celebrations.
- Resource Acquisition: Understanding the nuances of the rituals required extensive research and resource gathering. Students consulted with faculty, local community leaders, and religious scholars to gain insights into the appropriate practices and materials needed for the puja.
- Logistical Coordination: Coordinating the celebrations required meticulous planning and organization. Students had to manage various logistical aspects, such as sourcing puja items, arranging food for Iftar, and setting up event venues.

Despite these challenges, the students demonstrated remarkable resilience and resourcefulness. They sought information from diverse sources, engaged in interfaith dialogues, and worked collaboratively to overcome their initial unawareness. These efforts not only enriched their understanding of different religious practices but also highlighted the importance of unity and cooperation.

In summary, the challenges encountered were instrumental in enhancing the students' learning experiences and fostering a deeper sense of empathy and respect for different cultural traditions. The practice continues to evolve, with each celebration adding new dimensions to the students' understanding and appreciation of religious diversity.

  
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## STUDENTS OF ALL FAITHS CELEBRATE FESTIVALS LIKE SARASWATI PUJA WITH DEDICATION AND JOY



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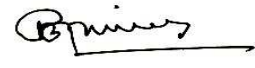
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