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HARIMOHAN GHOSE COLLEGE

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Ref. No.....

Date

BEST PRACTICE 2

Title:

SETU : THE BRIDGE OF HOPE GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN HARIMOHAN GHOSE COLLEGE

We are Human Beings First: Negotiating Gendered Tropes and Spaces to Create a Platform of Gender Inclusive Dialogue, including LGBTQAI+ minorities

1. The Context:

The gender sensitization programmes of Harimohan Ghose College has been able to create a space which intersects the public with the private world of not only women but also men. In a college, where girl students outnumber boys, gender sensitization programmes are crucial. Gender sensitization can be considered as one of the key practices of the institution, but it has become a **unique best practice to include within its space all gender- minorities, especially in the light of recognizing and understanding LGBTQAI+ narrative as well.** The college has organized Awareness Programmes and Seminars to spread consciousness and promote inclusivity among staff and students and create gender equality and sensibility in the campus.

2. Objectives of the Practice:

The primary objective of this best practice is to foster social sensitivity and inclusivity among Men and Women and Others, especially focusing on transgender and other marginalized gender communities within the college environment.

Specific goals include:

- Raising awareness about the issues and challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- Creating a safe and inclusive space for LGBTQIA+ voices and concerns.
- Educating students and staff on the impact of social discrimination and its consequences on mental health.
- Encouraging dialogue and understanding between diverse gender communities and the broader student body.


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3. The Practice:

The need for this practice arises from the recognition that transgender and marginalized gender communities often face significant social discrimination, which can lead to severe mental health challenges. Harimohan Ghose College aims to address these issues head-on by promoting inclusivity and fostering an environment where all students feel valued and supported.

The Women's Development Cell in collaboration with IQAC, HMGC organized a LGBTIQ+ SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP on 11th. July 2023 with the Resource Person, a Child and counselling psychologist (specializing in Neurodevelopmental disorders) and special educator, Ms. Alia Sheikh to speak about psychological and physiological aspects of the inclusion of the third gender in society. The presence of a Transgender faculty (who identifies as a woman) in our college and the acceptance of a gender minority by students without curiosity or derision points to the true nature of an inclusive educational environment in campus. The said Faculty was included in our WDC membership so that the voices of the gender-minorities can be represented. The involvement of the transgender professor as a convenor of the Seminar was particularly impactful. This professor, being the first from the other category to qualify for NET, has been a beacon of inspiration within the college. The students' natural respect and admiration for this professor underscore the college's commitment to treating every individual with dignity and respect, regardless of their gender identity

The seminar, "Rainbow Arch: Voices and Views" held on June 29, 2024, served as a cornerstone for these efforts, bringing in esteemed speakers and creating a platform for critical discussions. The event featured keynote speakers Ms. Mrityka Chatterjee, a member of the Hooghly District Transgender Protection Cell and faculty at Adamas University, and Dr. Debarati Das, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science and former Deputy Registrar at the University of Calcutta. Notably, one of the seminar convenors was a transgender professor from the college, the first to qualify NET from the other category. This professor is highly respected and adored by the students, reflecting the college's inclusive and accepting culture.

Dr. Debarati Das presented her speech in an innovative manner, deliberating upon the importance of gender sensitization in society for marginalized sections and the plausible and feasible ways to implement the theory into practice. She highlighted how gender sensitization can be extended out to different strata of society, especially the socio-economic cultural levels. She especially highlighted how the sexually marginalised people can be accepted in the higher education segment in our country.


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Ms. Mrittika Chatterjee stressed upon the legal ways to create spaces for gender-marginalized sections of society, especially transgenders. She emphasized the various ways Indian Literature, especially Bengali Literature has incorporated the different gender elements into weave an inclusive holistic narrative, showing how our ancient culture recognised and upheld the peripheral voices of the gender minorities in society.

Leading up to the seminar, the college conducted awareness campaigns through posters, social media, and student-led initiatives to generate interest and inform the college community about LGBTQIA+ issues.

The college highlighted existing support systems, such as counseling services and the Women's Development Cell, and discussed plans to enhance these resources to better support LGBTQIA+ students.

The seminar's objectives were achieved through several key activities:

- Educational Talks: The keynote speakers provided insightful presentations on the social discrimination faced by transgender and other marginalized gender communities. They highlighted the psychological impact of such discrimination and the importance of social support systems.

- Interactive Discussions: Participants were encouraged to engage in dialogue, ask questions, and share their perspectives. This interactive component helped to deepen understanding and foster empathy.

Other than these special programmes, gender sensitization drives are regularly done in the Institution. One of the most successful programmes organized by the Internal Complaints Cell (ICC) was the Counselling and Awareness Programme on sexual harassment and domestic violence held on 17th December 2022. The counselling session was undertaken by renowned advocate Paromita Bhattacharya and as she spoke of the various tenets of domestic violence laws and the various forms of sexual violence, many girl students poured out their personal experiences and shared stories of their personal spheres. The seminar ended on an emotive note however with new knowledge and a shared agenda to fight sexual harassment based on informed choice.

The Department of Political Science on 28th January 2023 organized another seminar titled, "Women's Empowerment: Issues and Challenges" which discussed what it means to be Empowered. This seminar involved students as speakers, and they discussed various facets of Empowerment.

Considering the stage that was set in gender sensitization, the Department of History in association with IQAC organized a seminar to remember the sacrifices made by the lesser known women freedom fighters in Indian Independence. The seminar titled, "The Role of Women Freedom Fighters in Indian Independence" was graced by Dr. C.B Roy, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of History, R.K Mission College held on 12.05.2023.


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4. Evidence of Success:


The success of this practice is evident from the positive feedback received from participants and the subsequent actions taken by the college community:

- Increased Awareness: The seminar significantly raised awareness about LGBTQIA+ issues among students and staff, leading to more informed and sensitive interactions.
- Policy Changes: The college administration began reviewing and updating its policies to ensure greater inclusivity and support for transgender and marginalized gender students.
- Student Initiatives: Inspired by the seminar, students formed support groups and clubs dedicated to promoting LGBTQIA+ rights and providing peer support.
- Faculty Training: The college organized additional training sessions for faculty and staff to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to support LGBTQIA+ students effectively.
- Active Participation of all the teaching and non-teaching members of the institution.
- Involvement and participation of the local community (Presence of Local Community Representative (Councilor)/ Police officers/ Women Constable).
- Students and teachers requested for more such workshops to be organized.

5. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

While implementing this best practice, the college encountered several challenges, which served as learning opportunities:

- Cultural Sensitivities: The initiative highlighted the need for greater cultural sensitivity and understanding. The college organized additional training sessions to address these needs, resulting in a more informed and empathetic community.
- Resource Allocation: Ensuring adequate resources for the seminar and subsequent support initiatives required meticulous planning and collaboration. This process enhanced the college's ability to manage and allocate resources effectively.
- Sustained Engagement: Maintaining long-term engagement and support for LGBTQIA+ issues requires continuous efforts. The college established regular follow-up events and ongoing educational efforts to ensure sustained engagement.


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6. Inclusivity and Women's Rights:

Harimohan Ghose College is deeply committed to promoting women's rights and gender equity on campus. The institution has established a Women's Development Cell that actively supports female students and staff through various initiatives, including:

- Counseling and Awareness Programs: Regular sessions are held to address issues such as sexual harassment and domestic violence. For example, a counseling and awareness program on sexual harassment and domestic violence against women was organized by the ICC on December 17, 2022.

- Empowerment Seminars: The Department of Political Science organized a seminar on "Women Empowerment: Issues and Challenges" on January 28, 2023, which focused on empowering women through education and advocacy.


- International Women's Day Celebrations: The ICC has been celebrating International Women's Day annually, with events that highlight women's achievements and promote gender equality. The most recent celebration was on March 10, 2023.

- Support Facilities: The college provides essential facilities such as lady security guards, CCTV surveillance, sanitary napkin dispensers managed by lady non-teaching staff, and exclusive ladies' rooms to ensure a safe and supportive environment for female students.

These efforts align with the college's principles of promoting equality, respect, and inclusivity. The institution's commitment to gender sensitivity extends to all aspects of campus life, fostering an environment where women can thrive academically and personally.

8. Conclusion:

The BEST PRACTICE "SETU : THE BRIDGE OF HOPE -- GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN HARIMOHAN GHOSE COLLEGE marks a significant step in Harimohan Ghose College's journey towards creating a more inclusive and sensitive environment for transgender and marginalized gender communities. By addressing social discrimination and its impact on mental health, the college has taken a proactive stance in promoting tolerance, understanding, and support for all its students. The success of these initiatives is the testament to the college's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive educational environment where every student can thrive. Additionally, the college's efforts to promote women's rights and gender equity further underscore its dedication to creating a holistic and supportive community for all.


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‘MADHUMO PARTHIBO RAJA’: AN LGBTIQ+ SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP (11.07.2023)




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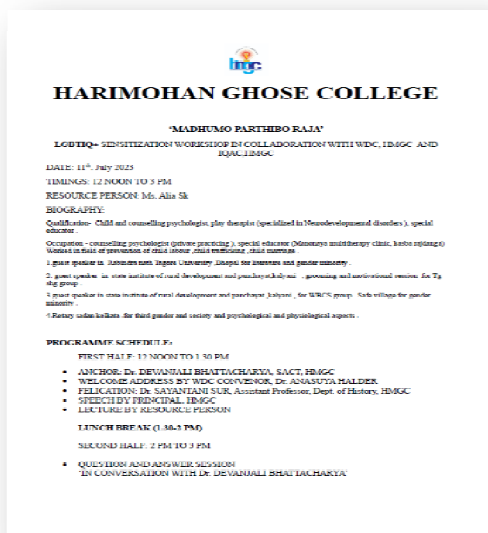
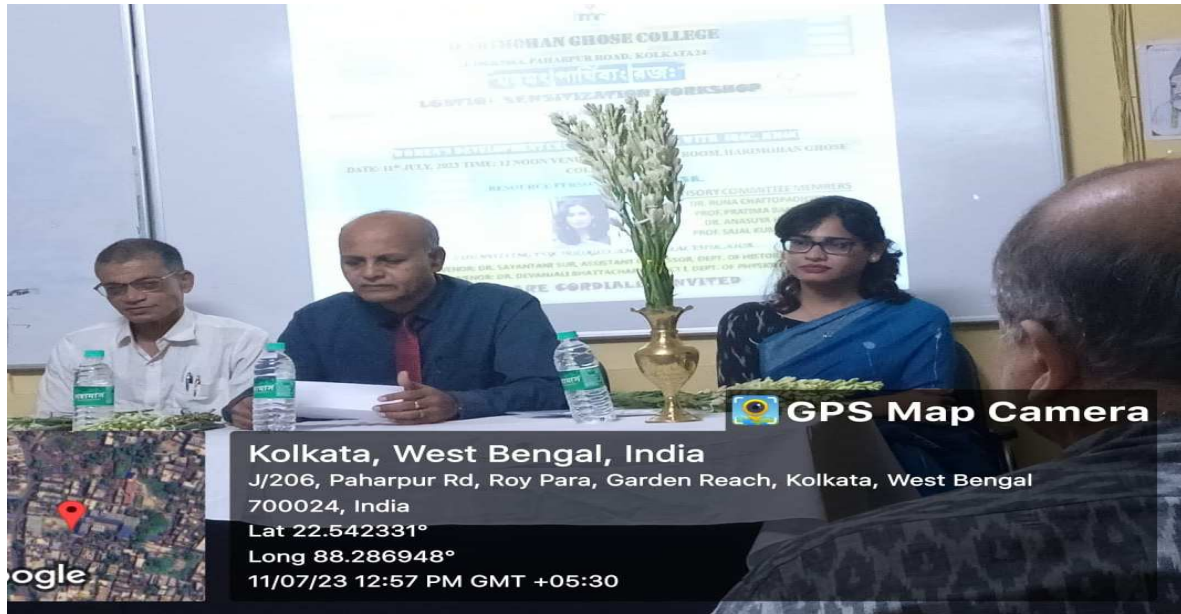
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HARIMOHAN GHOSE COLLEGE
J-206&208A, PAHARPUR ROAD, KOLKATA 24
LGBTIQA+ SENSITIZATION WEBINAR

RAINBOW ARCH: VOICES AND VIEWS™

Organised by
IQAC, Harimohan Ghose College, Kolkata

Date: 29th June, 2024 Time: 10.30 AM

<p>Dr. Debarati Das Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science & Former Deputy Registrar, University of Calcutta</p>	<p>Ms. Mrittika Chatterjee Department of Geography, School of Applied and Basic Science , Adamas University & Member of Hooghly District, Transgender Protection Cell, Govt. of West Bengal</p>
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Organising Committee Members
Dr. Devanjali Bhattacharya (Convenor)
Dr. Pratima Banerjee (Jt. Convenor)
Dr. Subhadipa Das
Dr. Gautam Naskar

[Click here for registration.](#)

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LGBTIQA+ SENSITIZATION WEBINAR
on
RAINBOW ARCH: VOICES AND VIEWS
Organized by IQAC, Harimohan Ghose College, Kolkata

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This is to certify that Dr. Pratima Banerjee

of University of Calcutta has actively participated in the webinar "RAINBOW ARCH: VOICES AND VIEWS", held on 29th of June, 2024.

Signature of Principal	Signature of Coordinator, IQAC	Signature of Jt. Convener	Signature of Convener

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