

Best Practices: 2018-19

Best Practice 1: Vidya Amritam Scholarships

Objective of the programme: The vision behind the establishment of Maheshtala College in 1971 was spreading of collegiate education among the economically challenged and minority community students of the area many of whom could not pursue higher studies due to poverty and other handicaps. The introduction of VidyaAmritam scholarships is an effort to make the students able to continue their studies despite many obstructions faced by them. Context: At present, the college caters to a multicultural student population comprising of girls and boys belonging to different communities, religions, caste and beliefs. Most of them come from a disadvantaged background. VidyaAmritam scholarships have been introduced with this group of students in mind.

Programme Practice: Besides Kanyashree, Aikyashree (Minority), Swami Vivekananda Merit cum Means Scholarship, Nabanna Scholarship, Waqf Scholarship, Principal and all teachers of the college provide scholarships to poor and meritorious students, the seed –money of which was procured by disposal of wastepaper inside and around the college. This scheme favouring students and using nonconventional means for resource mobilisation was documented in newspapers such as AnandabazarPatrika, EiSamay and The Hindu, and hailed as exemplary. Girls and boys from across all academic disciplines are identified by teachers on different parameters such as academic excellence, perseverance in face of physical adversity, poverty, physical handicap, excellence in special skills such as sports, any branch of study, regularity in attendance, regularity in library, overall proficiency and most innovative idea exemplified in model/project etc. Special awards are reserved for girlstudents. Teachers, both present and former, award prizes commemorating their deceased loved ones and their memory is eternalised by these young bright students who carry the legacy of the departed souls in their life, their pursuit of knowledge and overcoming obstacles. Evidence of Success: This scholarship scheme has positively impacted the enrolment of students and after introduction of the scheme ‘VidyaAmritam Scholarships’, there is a healthy competitive spirit among students. This will hopefully result in better academic performances by them in the coming sessions.

Best Practice 2: ESanjog for Three Es: Ease, Efficiency and Excellence

Objective of the programme: In today’s context many people’s lives are saturated so thoroughly with digital technology that the once obvious distinction between either being online or offline now fails to do justice to a situation where the Internet is an integral part of life. Indeed, it is often observed that younger generations are totally dependent on the Internet and is assumed to be a basic condition of modern life. This programme seeks to take advantage of this scenario and make the teachinglearning process more accessible. Context: The Internet is an inherently educational tool. Indeed, many people would argue that the main characteristics of the Internet align closely with the core concerns of education. For instance, both the Internet and education are concerned

with information exchange, communication, and the creation of knowledge. The ESanjogof the College uses this feature to make teachers and students come closer in an environment of learning.

Programme Practice: The college administration uses e-governance modules in synergy with the UGC, Higher Education department of the Government of West Bengal and affiliating university that is Calcutta University. Entire networking is through website notification and email transmission to and from the college. Admission to the college is completely online. The teaching departments have individual email IDs and connect with students through mail. History department has its own Facebook page, named Tihash in Bengali where every day HOD posts importance of that particular day in world and Indian history. All departments also have individual WhatsApp groups for greater, swifter and more personal connectivity with students. Teachers connect with students through emails, and send study materials and links online.

Evidence of Success: The general finding of this practice shows that the use of internet devices in the classroom setting has an impact on both teaching and learning practices. The results suggest that teachers can be divided into two categories: the innovative teachers and the traditional teachers. Innovative teachers attempt to shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach.

They have changed their teaching style by transforming lessons in accordance with the internet tools. Students have become more tech-savvy and present projects through powerpoint.

Students have prepared a small film on the college, and are engaged in web-enabled learning initiatives.