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#### The Aspects That Distinguish Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya As An Institution Of Higher Education

#### Introduction:

Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya, Baranagar (formerly, Bonhooghly College of Commerce), established in 1965 is an institution of higher education located in the greater Baranagar-Kamarhati Industrial Belt of West Bengal. The college, initially established by the philanthropic contributions of a few educationists with a vision to promote social development, has strived to serve as an edifice of higher education for students from the neighboring refugee colonies of the area. The college from its very inception therefore, prioritized those who have lived in the margins. Over time, it was noted that along with other marginalized categories, women and members who identify as LGBTQIA+ are enrolling in higher numbers in educational institutions like ours and thus the thrust area of the college began focussing on inclusivity and gender equity. The college's vision focuses on making higher-education accessible, gender-neutral, value-based, environment friendly, inclusive and job-oriented. While the mission statement also upholds inclusivity and gender equity. The college therefore has been constantly striving to promote inclusivity and gender equity by offering an equal outcome, making use of the same resources and opportunities that were erstwhile preserved for dominant caste-class-gender groups. This journey was never mistaken to be an easy one and has been riddled with challenges. However, the college centers its performance and activities around this key thrust area of Inclusivity and Gender Equity, tenaciously, by shouldering the responsibility of 'Empowerment Through Awareness'. The concept of Inclusivity and Gender Equity is woven deeply into the philosophical outlook of the institution and into the framework of pedagogy with an aim to create a teaching-learning experience that embodies these two concepts.

#### **Objectives:**

The key objectives through which the concepts of Inclusivity and Gender Equity are realized are as follows:

- Centering Teaching-Learning around the values of Inclusivity and Gender Equity where classrooms emerge as inclusive and gender-neutral spaces.
- Developing zero tolerance policies that aim to address gender bias and stereotypes.





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- Organizing seminars, conferences, workshops, awareness programmes that address Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Introducing value added courses that aim to sensitize students about Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Organizing Cultural Programmes that display a sensitivity towards Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Celebrating Commemorative Days that reinforce the concepts of Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Making administrative bodies sensitive towards the concepts of Inclusivity and Gender Equity and ensuring that these concepts are reflected in the composition of such bodies
- Developing infrastructure in a way that helps promote Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Sensitizing all stakeholders, including teaching and non-teaching staff about Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Renaming the Women's Cell as Gender Equity Cell with an aim to organize workshops and awareness programmes that will help dispel discrimination and bias
- Having a proactive Internal Complaints Committee
- Engaging students in out-of-the-classroom activities like field visits, educational tours, extension activities that will further sensitize them about Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Organizing activities through the NSS Unit with special focus on Inclusivity and Gender Equity
- Promoting Inclusivity and Gender Equity through establishing MOUs, Collaborations and Linkages with other academic institutions and non-governmental institutions
- Setting up of Pratyay: Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship to provide a platform for development of entrepreneurial skills of marginalized students, including those who identify as LGBTQIA+

#### **Practice:**

The idea of Inclusivity and Gender Equity are actualized in pedagogy in the following ways:

A) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Teaching-Learning: Inclusivity and Gender Equity is the focal area in the curriculum of the Departments of Sociology, Human Development, Political Science, History, Education and English. Apart from this structured curriculum, the concept of inclusivity and gender equity is upheld through non-formal and informal academic and beyond-academic exchanges in the classroom. The value of respecting diversity in all forms is encouraged. Classrooms provide a safe-space and every effort is made to openly talk about gender identity and experiences of discrimination. The teachers act as mentors and handhold those who have suffered discrimination.





- **B)** Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Zero Tolerance Policies: A Zero Tolerance Policy Towards Sexual Harassment and Ragging is followed in the college. No complaints of Sexual Harassment or Ragging have been reported in the time period of 2018-2013. (<u>https://pcmm.edu.in/images/pdf/ICC%20Policy%20Document%20PCMM.docx\_DSC</u> and <u>https://pcmm.edu.in/images/IQAC/Policy%20Document\_anti-ragging\_DSC.pdf</u>)
- C) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Seminars/Conferences/ Workshops/ Awareness Programmes/ Motivational Lectures: A variety of Seminars, Webinars and Conferences have been organized centered around the theme of Inclusivity and Gender Equity. A State Level Seminar on Equal Access of Women to Justice; International Webinar on Girl Interrupted: Trauma and Emancipation of Women; Webinar on Bengali Women and Gender Politics in Freedom Struggle; Decoding the Shadow Pandemic: International Webinar on Understanding the Complex Issue of Gender Violence Amidst Lockdown; National Webinar on Caste Inequality Debates in India; International Seminar on Need for Linguistic Diversity for Sustainable Development and International Seminar on Dalit Literature and Social Transformation are a few seminars and webinars reflecting Inclusivity and Gender Equity.
- **D) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Value-Added Courses**: Value Added Courses on Women and Society and Gender Sensitization were offered to the students.
- E) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Cultural Programmes: Inclusivity and Gender Equity are often the central theme of cultural programmes in the college. All cultural programmes celebrate cultural diversity through song and dance. Special events like Pride Month or Dalit History Month are celebrated through cultural programmes.
- F) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Celebration of Commemorative Days: Independence Day, Republic Day or Gandhi Jayanti are celebrated with the aim of re emphasizing the value of inclusivity and gender equity. Ambedkar Jayanti, Women's Day, and Pride Month are also regularly celebrated.
- **G)** Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Administrative Bodies: Inclusivity and Gender Equity is upheld through the formation, composition and representation in administrative bodies like the Governing Body, the IQAC, the ICC and the like.
- H) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Infrastructure: The Ladies' Hostel ensures that women do not miss out on the opportunity to study because of lack of suitable accommodation when away from home. A well planned Girls' Common Room provides adequate privacy to girl students and gives them a secure place to relax. CCTV cameras ensure greater security for all. Gender-neutral spaces are created within the campus which ensures comfort and security for those who identify as LGBTQIA+, one among these is the





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gender-neutral toilet.

- I) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Sensitization of Stakeholders: Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff are regularly sensitized about Inclusivity and Gender Equity. They are encouraged to participate in workshops and faculty development programmes that are based on the themes of Inclusivity and Gender Equity.
- J) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Setting Up of and Through Activities of the Gender Equity Cell: Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya had constituted a Women's Cell with the main objective of empowering and orienting women to recognize their true potential and to help them attain their own stand in a competing world. Its goal was the overall development of women in all spheres of their life. It also helped in creating awareness about important issues related to women and provided a forum for discussion and deliberation on a range of issues. The college soon realized that it was the need of the hour to recognize and celebrate diversity on campus and in society. Thus the Women's Cell was renamed and reborn as the Gender Equity Cell in 2022 with the aim of facilitating gender-inclusive awareness and to encourage dialogue and debate around the idea of gender equity, to bring about holistic social change. The Gender Equity Cell regularly hosts meetings and has organized a number of activities, workshops and sensitization programmes on women's health, women's rights, raising awareness about violence against women; rights of LGBTQIA+; awareness about gender stereotyping and gender bias. The Gender Equity Cell organizes events and sensitization programs throughout the year. Events are spread throughout the year and planned well in advance. Special days such as Women's day are celebrated. The Gender Action Plan is designed to conduct awareness programs and sessions for students and faculty members. The Gender Equity Cell organized a menstrual health and hygiene workshop for students and faculty members; a health and hygiene workshop for children belonging to an urban slum area; a workshop cum counseling session on gender bias and gender stereotype for students and faculty members; a seminar on HIV/AIDS awareness and action; a workshop cum poster competition on gender sensitization and a student enrichment programme to promote entrepreneurship through training on art, craft and jewelry making. A value added course on Gender Sensitization was also offered to the students from the Departments of Sociology and English. The Gender Equity Cell follows a detailed action plan. The Activities of the Gender Equity Cell are as follows:

| 1.              | Menstrual Hygiene A  | Awareness Workshop                | 01.12.2020                 | 50 participants which included |
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|    | Organized by Women's Cell<br>and Internal Quality Assurance Cell in<br>Collaboration with GlobalHunt Foundation and<br>Unicharm India   |            | faculty members and female students from<br>Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis<br>Mahavidyalaya<br>participated in this workshop.   |
|----|---|------------|---|
| 2. | Indian Council of Social Science<br>Research-Eastern Regional Centre<br>(ICSSR-ERC) sponsored one-day virtual<br>seminar titled: "Decoding The Shadow<br>Pandemic: A Virtual<br>Seminar On Understanding The Complex Issue<br>Of Gender Violence Amidst Lockdown" | 13.02.2021 | 125 participants which included students,<br>research scholars, faculty members,<br>members of support service organisations<br>like NGOs attended the virtual seminar.<br>Participants joined from various states of<br>India, the United Kingdom, Republic of<br>Korea, Nigeria, Portugal and Canada. |
| 3. | Special Motivational Online Lecture by Dr<br>Nandini Bhowmik To Commemorate<br>International Women's Day 2021 organised by<br>Women's Cell and Internal Quality Assurance<br>Cell of<br>Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya                                | 07.03.2021 | 45 participants which included faculty<br>members and students from Prasanta<br>Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya<br>attended this lecture.   |
| 4. | Awareness Programme on Gender Equality in collaboration with NSS and Shobar Poth  | 08.03.2022 | 81 participants attended the programme.   |
| 5. | Menstrual Health and Hygiene Workshop<br>Organized by Gender Equity Cell and IQAC in<br>collaboration with Anahat For Change<br>Foundation  | 09.06.2022 | 52 participants attended the workshop,<br>they included all the lady students and<br>faculty members of the college.  |





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| 6.  | Health and Hygiene Workshop: স্বাস্থ্যই সম্পদ<br>Organized by Gender Equity Cell and IQAC in<br>collaboration with Janakalyan Samiti in<br>collaboration with Madhabilata: The Fight For<br>Her Justice           | 14.06.2022 | The workshop was conducted by 8<br>students of the college to spread awareness<br>about Health and Hygiene among 30<br>underprivileged children. |
|-----|---|------------|--|
| 7.  | Value Added Course on Gender Sensitization<br>Organized by Department of English and<br>Department of Sociology, Prasanta Chandra<br>Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya  | 15.08.2022 | 30 students registered for the course from<br>Semester III Honours.  |
| 8.  | Workshop: Counseling Session on Gender Bias<br>and Gender Stereotype Organized by<br>Department of Sociology; Gender Equity Cell<br>and IQAC in collaboration with Anahat for<br>Change Foundation                | 23.09.2022 | 120 students and 25 faculty members attended.  |
| 9.  | Seminar on HIV/AIDS: Awareness and Action<br>was organized by the Department of Sociology,<br>the Gender Equity Cell and IQAC of Prasanta<br>Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya                                    | 01.12.2022 | 130 (Including Teachers, Students, All<br>Faculties)   |
| 10. | Choosing Pratyusha: Gender Champions of PCMM and felicitating Trailblazers  | 09.03.2023 | 100 students and 25 faculty members attended.  |
| 11. | Workshop on Gender Sensitization and Poster<br>Competition Organized by the Gender Equity<br>Cell and IQAC of Prasanta Chandra<br>Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya in collaboration<br>with Anahat for Change Foundation | 14.03.2023 | 120 students and 25 faculty members attended.  |





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| 12. | Programme: Student Enrichment Programme on<br>Art, Craft and Jewellery Making Organized by<br>Gender Equity Cell and IQAC in collaboration<br>with the Research and Development Cell of<br>Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for<br>Women | 20.03.2023 | 100 students and 25 faculty members attended. |
|-----|---|------------|---|

Apart from the Gender Equity Cell, gender-based and gender related programmes are organized by the various Departments of the college, as well as by other subcommittees. They are as follows:

| Name of the Programme   | Date       | Link (if any)   |
|---|------------|---|
| International Webinar "Girl Interrupted:<br>Trauma and Emancipation of Women"<br>organized by Department of English in<br>collaboration with Women's Cell and<br>Internal Quality Assurance Cell of Prasanta<br>Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya | 13.07.2020 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3q5jlY<br>KwU_Q&t=13s<br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBpM<br>NPJZ96o&t=575s<br>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKOD<br>qg3PXls&t=250s |
| State Level Webinar on Promoting<br>Awareness about the Role of Internal<br>Complaints Committee organized by<br>Internal Complaints Committee and<br>Internal Quality Assurance Cell in<br>Collaboration with Sanhita: Gender<br>Resource Centre | 21.09.2020 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXaK<br>VNM4ILM   |





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| Value Added Course on Women and<br>Society offered by the Department of<br>Sociology  | 01.12.2021 to 18.12.2021 |         |
|---|--------------------------|---------|
| Pride Month Celebrations organized by<br>Cultural Subcommittee  | 01.06.2022 to 30.06.2022 | Offline |
| Pragati: Exhibition Cum Sale organized by<br>Pratyay: Centre for Innovation, Incubation<br>and Entrepreneurship   | 23.09.2022               | Offline |
| Awareness Workshop on Elimination of<br>Violence Against Women organized by<br>Department of Human Development in<br>collaboration with Madhabilata: Fight For<br>Her Justice | 25.11.2022               | Offline |
| Special Talk on Gender Sensitization by Dr<br>Zaid Al Baset organized by the Department<br>of Sociology and the Department of<br>English                                      | 08.05.2023               | Offline |
| Awareness Programme on Vishakha<br>Guidelines organized by Internal<br>Complaints Committee and Internal Quality<br>Assurance Cell  | 27.05.2023               | Offline |

K) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Setting Up of and Through Activities of the Internal Complaints Committee: The Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) of Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya was reformed in the year 2020 as per the guidelines of POSH Act. 2013 and UGC. The Internal Complaint Committee has been formed in order to provide protection to the students and employees against sexual harassment at work place and thereafter for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment. The Internal Complaints Committee has organized An Awareness Programme on the Role of Internal Complaints Committee and An Awareness Programme on Vishakha Guidelines.





- L) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Out-Of-The-Classroom Activities: The values of Inclusivity and Gender Equity are taught to students even outside the classroom setting, while on field visits and educational excursions. Students are engaged in various extension activities with marginalized sections of the community like children of sex-workers.
- M) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Activities of the NSS Unit: The NSS Unit organizes extension and community outreach programmes through which students are sensitized about Inclusivity and Gender Equity. Awareness Programme on Women's Health; Awareness Programme on Gender Equality; HIV/AIDS Awareness and Breast Cancer Awareness are some of the programmes organized by the NSS Unit that promotes Inclusivity and Gender Equity.
- N) Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in MOUs, Collaborations and Linkages: The college signs MOUs, Collaborations and Linkages with various academic institutions and recognized non-governmental organizations to organize collaborative programmes to promote awareness about Inclusivity and Gender Equity. The college has jointly organized with Anahat for Change Foundation a Gender Sensitization and Counseling Session on Gender Stereotype; the college has jointly organized with Madhabilata: Fight For Her Justice a workshop on International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women; the college has jointly organized with Hiralal Mazumdar Memorial College for Women a Student Enrichment Programme on Jewelry Making and has organized jointly with Banipur Mahila Mahavidyalaya a Faculty Development Programme on Gender Sensitization.
- **O)** Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Activities of Pratyay: Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis Mahavidyalaya Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship: actively engaging in enabling students of the institute to get first-hand training and experience in entrepreneurship. The centre promotes innovation and provides a range of supporting services like mentoring, networking and providing a platform to cultivate entrepreneurial skills of students. The incubation centre aims to provide hands-on training in handicrafts, jewellery-making, food processing etc; to provide support services like networking; to provide a platform for students and alumni to exhibit and showcase their entrepreneurial projects and to provide technological and other logistic support to promote and enhance entrepreneurial projects of students. The incubation centre of the college was established in 2022 and a room is now being set up as the office of this centre. The incubation centre will also serve as a Heritage Resource Centre of North 24 Parganas. The incubation centre has organized two prominent activities-- Student Enrichment Programme on Art, Craft and Jewellery Making, held on 20.03.2023 and Pragati: An Endeavour to Promote Entrepreneurship among the student community of the college through a pre-puja exhibition-cum-sale.





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Teaching-Learning



Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Seminars/Conferences/ Workshops/ Awareness Programmes/ Motivational Lectures



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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Value-Added Courses



Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Cultural Programmes





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Celebration of Commemorative Days





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Infrastructure





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Sensitization of Stakeholders





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Setting Up of and Through Activities of the Gender Equity Cell





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Setting Up of and Through Activities of the Internal Complaints Committee





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Out-Of-The-Classroom Activities





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in the Activities of the NSS Unit



Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in MOUs, Collaborations and Linkages





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Inclusivity and Gender Equity: Reflection in Activities of Pratyay: Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship

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