

GENDER AUDIT REPORT
OF
VIDYA PRASARAK Mandal's
K. G. Joshi College of Arts &
N.G. Bedekar College of Commerce, Thane

Gender Audit is a process of assessing organizational initiatives on mainstreaming gender and women empowerment. It is a tool to evaluate institutional compliance with the policy of gender equality. Gender audit is a summary statement, documenting practices of an institution towards gender mainstreaming, identifying the strengths and weakness in gendered outcomes in policy execution and recommending ways of addressing them. Gender audit of a Higher Education Institution is an assessment, both quantitative and qualitative, of its practices and policies from the point of view of welfare, empowerment and safeguard of its female staff and girl students.

The Vidya Prasarak Mandal's K. G. Joshi College of Arts & N.G. Bedekar College of Commerce, Thane, carried out the Gender Audit exercise on October 23, 2018. The Gender Audit team is pleased to present this report on its observations regarding the efforts of Vidya Prasarak Mandal's K. G. Joshi College of Arts & N.G. Bedekar College of Commerce towards institutionalizing gender perspective at the individual, work unit and organizational level on college campus.

The Gender Audit team (GAT) unequivocally appreciates the initiatives taken by K. G. Joshi College of Arts & N.G. Bedekar College of Commerce in volunteering for a gender audit. We acknowledge the cooperation of college authority, teaching staff, administrative staff and students who provided us with appropriate and fair information during our visit to the college. We also thank them for bearing with us during the critical interrogation sessions of the audit process. Our special thanks to I/C Principal (Dr.) Suchitra A. Naik, Vice-Principals, and members of the Gender Audit Committee (GAC) of the college, for their support throughout the audit process and enabling us to complete this important task successfully.

THE GENDER AUDIT PROCESS

The gender audit process was undertaken at two levels. Firstly, a copy of the Gender Audit Report of the college was given to the members of the GAT. In the opening meeting with the Gender Audit Committee (GAC) of the college, Dr. Suja Abraham, Member Secretary, WDC, in her presentation elaborated on the important highlights of the report. The report contained gender disaggregated information on initiatives and achievements of the college under seven criterion of NAAC assessment of HEI, namely, Curricular Aspect, Teaching-Learning and Evaluation, Research, Consultancy and Extension, Infrastructure and Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression, Organization and Management and Healthy Practices over the period 2015-16 to 2017-18.

At the second level, the GAT interacted with the GAC of the college, the teaching and non-teaching staff, student representatives of Students' Council, NSS etc. The GAT also visited College Library, Girl's Common Room, Staff Common Room, Administrative Section, Gymkhana and Canteen etc. The GAT critically authenticated the information shared by the members of GAC of the College.

GENDER POSITIVE FEATURES OF JOSHI AND BEDEKAR COLLEGE

The GAT is pleased to state that the college has undertaken several gender positive initiatives to make the campus gender inclusive. The Management of Vidya Prasarak Mandal, Thane and I/C Principal (Dr.) Suchitra A. Naik along with the members of GAC, teaching and non-teaching staff and students deserve great compliments for this.

The GAT appreciates constitution of GAC of the college. It is well represented by important components, such as IQAC, WDC, ICC, office and NGO representatives, that are liable for mainstreaming gender initiative in college functioning. The GAT is pleased to state here that the Gender Audit Report of the college, furnishing information on gender disaggregated (Male and Female) quantitative data under NAAC assessment criterion and descriptive information, has certainly helped the GAT to assess over-all gender receptivity of the college.

The observations stated below are based on the abovementioned two level gender audit process carried out by the GAT.

1. Gender ratio of teaching faculty in Degree, Self-Finance and Visiting categories is favourable to female faculty as well as in the categories of Professor and Associate Professor Grades.
2. The safety and security measures towards girl students have helped the college to attract girl students. The gender ratio of students' enrollment during the report period (2015-16 to 2017-18) is consistently favourable to girl students in Arts and Commerce faculties.
3. The male to female ratio of teaching faculty securing Ph.D. for the report period is 5:7. Female teachers are encouraged to participate in academic endeavor and have received awards and recognition at State level as well as from University of Mumbai, local bodies and organizations.

The academic environment is conducive to encourage female teaching staff to excel in academic research projects. The male to female ratio for receiving research projects sponsored by UGC and University of Mumbai is 02:06. The Internal Research Scheme to promote research culture is a noteworthy initiative of the college management. The male to female ratio of Ph.D. guides in the college is 03:02. The college management boosts academic enhancement by providing financial support, as such, female teaching staff is also making headway in respect of presentation of research papers at national/international conferences, and publication of books as well as attending workshops etc.

4. There is also a distinct initiative taken by various departments and individual teachers to promote gender perspective in the college by organizing lectures, presenting/publishing papers on gender issues. Special efforts are made by the teachers to pursue further studies and promote research in gender issues.

Female teaching staff pursuing Ph.D. research, completing PG Certification and Short-term course in 'Women's Studies' and 'Gender Sensitization' etc. are particularly worth mentioning. Two female teachers have been awarded Ph.D. degree for their research, while two more teachers are pursuing research for Ph.D. degree in Women's Studies.

5. The GAT appreciates the efforts taken by the college towards enforcement of the 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The college has constituted the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).

The Women Development Cell (WDC) of the college has been particularly instrumental for internalizing gender perspective on the college campus by organizing range of sensitization programme, workshops and lectures as well as mega-event such as a Two-Day National Conference including Plenary Sessions, Panel Discussions, Paper presentation by participants, Inter-collegiate competitions etc.

Initiatives of the WDC to promote all-round personality development of girl students by organizing Health and Nutrition Programmes, Self-Defense Training Programmes, Celebration of International Women's Day etc. are highly commendable.

6. Exclusive measures are taken to enhance learning abilities, self-confidence, career orientation, awareness on social issues, and skills development of girl students. Extension activities are organized to create awareness on and sensitivity towards contemporary social issues. Girl students have particularly benefited from Personal Counselling, Career Counselling, Guidance for Competitive Exams, Yoga, Meditation and Certificate Courses and Soft Skill Development Programmes. Girl students have also benefit from scholarship, freeships provided by the Government and institution.

The N.C.C., N.S.S. Units and the Department of Life Long Learning and Extension (DLLE) of the college offer opportunities to the girl students to participate in basic military training, Sainik Camps, Trekking Expeditions, NCC National Games, Shooting Competition etc. as well as social service activities such as Tree Plantation, Swachhata Abhiyan, Pulse Polio Drive, Gender Sensitization Workshops/Camps, Street Play, collaboration programmes with NGOs etc.

7. The college is well equipped with basic infrastructure and amenities to take care of health, hygiene, recreation and safety of women staff and girl students. There are well maintained washrooms, common room with resting facilities and gymkhana facilities for girl students and changing room facilities for class IV staff. Two sanitary napkin vending machine and

incinerator are installed in the girls' common room. Suggestion Boxes have been placed at 03 different places for students to report their complaints. Information about Internal Complaints Committee has been displayed in the college. The college has worked out a novel way of performing skits in all classes to create awareness about the Counselling Cell activities. 48 CCTVs have been installed at prominent positions to enhance security of the girl students, female teachers and staff. Use of bio-metric to enter the campus provides additional security facilities to the staff and students. The college staff and students can avail medical consultation facilities at VIDYA PRASARAK Mandal's Medical College.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENDER AUDIT TEAM

Recommendations made by the gender audit team here are founded on the bellow mentioned sources that provide guidelines to ensure gender positive environment on campuses of higher education institutions (HEIs). These sources are, firstly, the 'NAAC- Assessment Updates' on Gender Sensitive Quality Indicators. Secondly, recommendations of the taskforce, set up by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in "SAKSHAM" report on 'Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programme for Gender Sensitization on Campus'. Thirdly, University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulation, 2015 ("Regulations"), based on the provisions under 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The college has also submitted the checklist presented in the booklet "Zero Tolerance For Sexual Harassment Of Students & Women In Colleges and Universities", published by Maharashtra State Commission For Women to ensure compliance with University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulation, 2015 ("Regulations"), by HEIs.

1. Constitution of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the college is as per the provisions under 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

It is, however, desirable to have three students who are enrolled at the UG, PG and research scholar levels respectively on the ICC who would participate in the grievance redressal mechanism if the matter involves students.

Further, it is also desirable to have adequate representation of male members on ICC as well as WDC and GAC of the college.

2. Also, Sections 3(1)(j), 3(2)(7), 3(2)(10) and 4(1)(c) of the checklist presented in the booklet "Zero Tolerance For Sexual Harassment Of Students & Women In Colleges and Universities", published by Maharashtra State Commission For Women to ensure compliance with University Grants Commission (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulation, 2015, are applicable to and need to be adhered to in the spirit of the definitions of the Regulation, 2015, in the policy by all HEIs.

3. Female faculty need to be encouraged to contribute in curriculum aspects by being members of the Boards of Studies and Faculty in various subjects of University of Mumbai and Autonomous Colleges.
4. The college is accredited with “A” Grade by NAAC. It is also a recipient of “Best College” award of the University of Mumbai. The college has state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities and excellent teaching faculties who have acquired expertise in Gender Issues and Women’s Studies. It is desirable that the college serves as a center for disseminating the message of “Gender Equality and Women Empowerment”. The college can organize workshops for administrators including the members of College Management as well as parents on ‘Gender Sensitization and Sexual Harassment Issues’.

Academic/Certificate courses wherein women have natural professional preference like Nursing, Education, Event Management, Hospitality Management, Fashion Designing, Social Work, etc. may be given due consideration in future academic expansion of the college.

Workshops/Programmes may be arranged to create awareness and sensitivity on the issues of Masculinity, Transgender, Lesbians and Gay etc. for all the stake holders of the institution. Even the male and transgender individuals are vulnerable to many forms of sexual harassment, humiliation and exploitation.

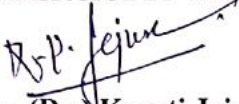
5. College library can be further updated by increasing its collection of books/magazines on gender related subject. There are about 1597 girl students pursuing Arts and Commerce Under-Graduation courses in the academic year 2017-18. It would be desirable to have a bigger girl’s common room along with more toilet facilities. It is desirable to place the Drop Boxes out of the range of CCTV surveillance in order to protect anonymity, if the complainant wishes to have so.
6. Students may be encouraged to hone their creative ability, sensitivity and artistic imagination by keeping a section on ‘Gender Issues’ in the college magazine. Innovative programs may be arranged with Science Association, Fine Arts Association, Nature Club, Camera Creatives and other associations of the college to create awareness about gender issues in different walks of life using different Medias.

Like class-wise presentation of skits to create awareness about the Counselling Cell activities, efforts be made to disseminate information about the purpose of ICC.


7. Marked Dropout rate is evident for female students of ST category particularly at TY class level both for Arts and Commerce faculties. Similar trend is seen for male and female students of SC and ST categories particularly in Commerce faculties. Efforts need to be taken to address the issue. Promoting more years of learning is a major challenge in this category.

8. Along with the information on Scholarship benefit received by students, it is also desired to have information on SC/ST/OBC/VJNT girl student beneficiaries of freships/scholarships, National Fellowship for Minority Students and Post-Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child etc.
9. It is desirable to have a balance of women security staff who are adequately trained with respect to gender issues.

GENDER AUDIT TEAM:


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