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## **Institutional Distinctiveness : Community Outreach**

Kishore Bharati Bhagini Nivedita College (Co-ed), located in Vivekananda Pally adjacent to Kishore Bharati Boys School and Kishore Bharati Girls School, initially began as an extension to facilitate higher education for local students. Originally a girls' college, its transformation into a co-ed institution aimed to broaden its appeal and attract students from diverse backgrounds, despite its distance from major transportation hubs and competition from well-established colleges along Diamond Harbour Road.

Over the years, the college has strived to overcome its locational challenges and enhance its reputation as a reliable educational institution. Through rigorous academic programmes and community engagement efforts, it has successfully attracted students not only from the local area but also from across the district, city, and even neighbouring states.

A significant part of the college's community engagement strategy involves proactive measures to integrate with the local community and establish itself as a responsible stakeholder in the region. These efforts include targeted advertising during admission seasons, distributing handbills to nearby schools, and participating in various community-oriented initiatives.

One of the cornerstone initiatives has been the college's commitment to social responsibility through diverse community service projects. These initiatives aim not only to benefit the local community but also to enrich the educational experience of students by instilling values of empathy, responsibility, and civic engagement.

Beyond these initiatives, the college integrates community service into its academic framework through volunteering opportunities, like teaching underprivileged children beyond college hours, service-learning courses, community-based research and partnerships with local organizations like clubs for cleaning local field before sports etc. These activities not only address pressing community needs but also enhance students' personal growth and professional development by cultivating skills such as teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. It also enriches the educational experience of students by providing practical insights into real-world issues.

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On occasions like Independence Day and Bhasha Dibas, the college organizes spirited events that involve the participation of NCC cadets and local residents fostering a sense of camaraderie and community spirit. Similarly, during Van Mahotsav, the college promotes environmental awareness by planting trees in the locality and distributing saplings to local schools.

Our institution has been recognised by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (M.H.R.D) Government of India, for SAP (SWACHHTA ACTION PLAN). This makes us more committed to cleanliness and green initiatives that we have undertaken over the years under the aegis of IQAC, engaging our Rural Engagement Cell.

The college has undertaken Cleanliness drive in and outside the campus, march for Road Safety Week in the locality, march for Dengue Awareness in the locality where locals also spontaneously joined, organised Blood Donation Camps, survey on work safety of women selling wares in the market leading up to International Women's day etc.

The Institute actively partook in vaccination drive during the covid-19 pandemic. It was an IQAC initiative. 404 students and a few non – teaching staff were given either the first or the second dose of Covishield according to their requirements. The initiative spanned a period from May 2021 to September 2021.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the college stepped up its efforts by organizing relief fund distributions, awareness programmes, and donations of essential supplies such as masks, sanitizers, and face shields to vulnerable groups like local slum dwellers and also police personnel who worked relentlessly facing innumerable hazard during the covid pandemic times. Additionally, it provided ration support to impoverished families, nearly thirty in number and for three months as a programme under the Rural Engagement Cell. The college also distributed relief materials in the aftermath of Cyclone Amphan. The institution has gone beyond its immediate locality to provide relief to the tone of 3,40,000 rupees in the submerged Gosaba region of Sundarban in our state post the devastating cyclone Amphan.

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In addition to these efforts, the college conducts extension lectures and webinars addressing pertinent issues such as mental health during crises like COVID-19 and Cyclone Amphan, ensuring the well-being of its students, staff and the broader community.

Throughout the year, the college also engages in activities like distributing blankets to elderly pavement – dwellers during winters, organizing Christmas charity drives for children, distributing new clothes before Durga Puja to underprivileged youngsters and study kits to local slum children during Saraswati Puja. Furthermore, during exam periods, the college supports high school students of the neighbourhood and their parents with essential items like pens and a drink of a cup of Glucon D under the sweltering hot sun, fostering goodwill and support within the community.

Beyond its work in the immediate vicinity the college has worked relentlessly for inclusivity. We have organised awareness and sensitization seminars on the LGBTQ + community where transgender activists and mental health professional have spoken about their community at large, clarifying confusion among students and staff alike.

Our heartfelt collaboration with Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy has spanned a few years now. It started with our college being invited as chief guest for a webinar which was organised by New Alipore College in collaboration with IICP. Keeping in mind the inclusivity of all sectors of society, our student have collaborated with students of that institute for cultural programmes. They danced and sang in tandem, recited poetries for them on the occasion of their foundation day. Students from IICP were provided with useful utilities that they needed as they were invited as Guests of Honour in our college socials. Our College and IICP reached out to each other for various collaborative programmes whenever invited. It has so far been an enriching and a very moving experience for students and staff alike.

Our college has also tried to spread awareness about Persons with Disabilities by organising seminars and campaigns.

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In conclusion, Kishore Bharati Bhagini Nivedita College (Co-ed) exemplifies a commitment to social responsibility through its comprehensive community engagement initiatives. The college tries to enhance its reputation as a responsible institution and nurtures a generation of socially conscious students equipped to make a positive impact in society. The enthusiasm and the efforts of the students in these initiatives need special mention. In a modern society driven by self – love and selfishness, our students with their interest and spontaneity to engage in social work show us how these young minds when directed in the right direction can become agents of positive social change. Their support helps our institute to forge our unique path ahead and carve our niche in the community.

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*Principal* **Kishore** Bharati Bhagini Nivedita College (Co-Ed.)