

## Annual Gender Sensitization Plan 2023-24

Higher education and research are among the key instruments for social empowerment and transformation. Together, these can promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion, both within the institutional context, and in society at large. Yet, Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) remain both gendered and gendering organizations, which remain marked by gender-based hegemonies, imbalances, hierarchies, and segregations across institutions and disciplines. The persistence of these should not be underestimated, and it may be noted that both the globalisation and the massification of higher education systems have been accompanied by the increase in disparities. Illustratively, men continue to remain at the centre of power, even while this institutional positioning and the normativity that it breeds and amplifies are being challenged by gender minorities.

In order to tackle gender inequalities in the higher education context, St Stephen's College puts in place a Gender Sensitisation Plan (GSP) annually that then seeks to uphold, promote and institutionalise gender equality in the institution's culture, structure and processes. This GSP is committed to creating and maintaining a culture in which all members of the College community – students, teachers and non-teaching staff – can work together in an environment free of all forms of gender violence, harassment, exploitation, intimidation and discrimination. Even while the College is committed to freedom of expression and association, it strongly discourages forms of discrimination, gender stereotyping, gender discrimination and violence. The Gender Awareness Brief (GAB) will help foster an understanding of the ways in which gender discrimination manifests, persists and can be counteracted.

The GSP will guide all activities at St Stephen's College that are aimed at ensuring gender equity and gender sensitivity, as well as equal opportunity for women. The proposed Gender Awareness Brief (GAB) will serve as an important point of reference in this. Both the GSP and the GAB will be guided by the principals *Constitution of India*, Ministry of Women and Child Development's *National Policy for Women*, and international instruments on Gender Equality like the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) and the Conventions against discrimination in education etc.,. Both aim at providing gender responsive support.

The College may identify Departments, disciplines and Centres that will carry out focused work on gender equality, sensitivity and equal opportunity and diversity. Additionally, all college employees and students are seen as being responsible for upholding the objectives of the plan in letter and spirit.

It was decided to continue with the GSP for the last year in 2023-24 as well. The GSP will seek to do the following:

### **1. To actively and practically promote gender awareness and equality on campus:**

The key objective here is to spread awareness on gender issues among students, faculty, administrative and other non-teaching staff, in line with the GSP and the Brief. This may be achieved by actively and practically encouraging and promoting understandings about gender as a concept in its intersections with various social and cultural axes, such as class, caste, sexuality, education, age, religion, ability, ethnicity, race, nationality and so on. These concepts are necessary to understand that the gender question is not just about women and men and how

they interact, but about the prevention of gender biases that prevail in institutions and society at large. An engagement with gender and gender-based discrimination is a key way to empower girls, women, and differently gendered persons to achieve social and institutional equality and justice. Towards these goals, each department will be encouraged to

- a. submit a programme of action in line with the GSP, that will detail the steps that they propose to take towards this
- b. submit a semester-end report detailing the steps/actions that it has undertaken towards this.

Ideally, this should be undertaken by all departments of the college, with specific emphasis on the ways in which gender impacts the academic, intellectual and social spaces that they occupy.

## **2. To create a Gender Awareness Brief (GAB):**

The GAB will seek to compile information about gender as a concept, and in all its intersections and ramifications. The module will be aimed at sensitizing all genders towards existing gender inequalities and injustices. The promotion of such sensitisation aims to bring essential attitudinal changes towards institutionalised gender based discrimination. The module will introduce and define prevalent gender-related terminology and concepts, and reflect upon the ways in which gender and other gendered social categories are socially constructed. In order to do this, the module will set out basic concepts such as gender, sex, sexuality, gender roles, gender stereotypes, the gendered division of labour, gender discrimination, gender based violence, masculinity, femininity, patriarchy, gender equality and so on. It will also elaborate on the crucial role that education can play in sensitizing the college community towards the elimination of gender-based discrimination. This will be undertaken in the spirit of promoting an egalitarian and gender-safe campus in accordance with the principals of justice and equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution and key national and international instruments. The GAB will be reviewed annually to incorporate new understandings and concepts. The GAB will be constructed under the guidance of the Senior Tutor in consultation with a committee constituted by the Principal.

## **3. To examine and reviewing existing policies, rules, regulations and procedures:**

This will be undertaken formulating a set of gender sensitisation guidelines based on the GSP and GAM, that will incorporate gender-equal values, and promote cultures of equality and justice, as well as of tolerance and respect for gender and sexual difference and marginality.

## **4. To plan, implement, monitor and evaluate gender specific initiatives:**

This will include, *inter alia*,

- a. the dissemination of information about gender issues to students in classroom through lectures and tutorials, the primary spaces for teacher-student interface;
- b. spreading engagement with and awareness of gender issues through Class Representatives;
- c. Encouraging activities and events related to gender issues through extra and co-curricular activities conducted by societies and clubs;
- d. Organising workshops, conferences, seminars, training programmes, (certificate) courses;
- e. Organising and supporting a range of cultural activities such as slam poetry, poster-making, dramatic productions etc.,

These activities may be organised and undertaken by College Societies like the Gender Cell, Centres like the Centre for Gender Culture and Social Processes and Departments across the College, in consultation with the aforementioned Committee constituted by the Principal.

**5. Endorse the role of platforms like the Internal Complaints Committee, Anti-ragging Committee and the Grievance Redressal Committee**

These bodies have their own objectives and jurisdiction. Nevertheless, with regard to inevitable overlaps, i.e., to the extent that their roles and work entail gender-related issues as well as gender awareness in general, the GSP proposes to serve as a set of guidelines that may be referred to by these committees.

**6. Encourage initiatives like the Centre for Gender, Culture and Social Processes and the Gender Study Cell**

Apart from some of the activities listed above being undertaken in coordination with and/or under the aegis of these centres, the GSP may serve as a set of guidelines for exploring more such initiatives.

**7. To coordinate and monitor gender activities in all departments**

As noted above, all Departments will be encouraged to submit a programme of action in line with the GSP and GAB, that will detail the steps that they propose to take towards achieving and maintaining gender equality. They will also be encouraged to and to submit a semester-end report detailing the steps/actions that it has undertaken towards this.

IQAC, 2023-24