

Bankim Sardar College – A College with Potential for Excellence

In Search of Excellence in Sunderbans

Our Best Practice – Sundarmon

1. Title of the Practice

Sundarmon (Beautiful Minds)

2. Objectives of the Practice

The objective is the empowerment of students through skill development.

Every student is born with a Beautiful Mind (*Sundar* means Beautiful & *mon* means Minds) which is to be unearthed and cultured. The teachers in the HEIs by way of becoming mentors of their student mentees can play a catalytic role in this regard. The college organises an event called *Sundarmon* every year and its objective is to carry out programmes and events beyond the narrow domain of regular teaching-learning-evaluation and to provide a platform to the students so that they can discover their pent up skills and latent potential for excellence.

3. The Context

The region called Sunderbans, undoubtedly is one of the most challenging topologies of the mother earth but is latent with caged potentialities in terms of human resources. Bankim Sardar College since its establishment in 1955 is transmitting smiles in the Sunderbans by way of spreading the lights of higher education among the thousands of socially deprived students, to reflect their potential and be inclusive in the national mainstream. During 2016, UGC recognized the potential of the college to serve families in the Sunderbans and conferred upon the college the status of **College with Potential for Excellence**. The college is thus committed to bring out excellence from among those who during their childhood had very little opportunity to be excellent as three-quarter of the children come from the SC, ST & OBC communities and BPL families living in the disadvantaged locations throughout the islands of Sunderbans by way of organising the Sundarmon every year.

4. The Practice

1. Teachers as mentors inspire the student mentees to take part in several contesting events that would help them to develop **visual skills** (photography contest, poster contest, pencil sketch contest etc), **oratory skills** (debate, seminar, mock parliament etc) **performing art** (dance, singing, recitation), **creative art** (science exhibition, art exhibition, creative writing publications), **functional skills** (bio-data contest, letter/email writing contest, interview contest, report writing contest).
2. Mentors make concerted effort to guide the students to develop skills, build mindsets to perform and imbibe the feeling “**even I can.**”
3. During
 - a) 2017-18 altogether 217 participants participated in 14 intra-college events.
 - b) 2018-19 a total of 183 students took part in 12 intra-college events.
 - c) 2019-20 the Sundarmon events were made open to students from twenty two others colleges and altogether 244 participants participated in 13 inter-college events of which 107 were from the college itself
4. During 2019-20, IQAC invited creative writing in the form of imaginary dialogue, imaginary interview, autobiography, short stories etc from students. Altogether 51 students from several colleges across all geographical boundaries contributed their writings towards the compilation of an ISBN anthology of creative writings, *Beautiful Minds*.
5. The uniqueness of this practice is that *Sundarmon* is not a cultural programme in itself but in entirety, it addresses the requirements related to the Skill Enhancement Courses of the CBCS curriculum and

makes the students learn to identify skills that are to be acquired, relative strengths and weaknesses in them and brings improvement in them through performances.

6. Another important aspect of this practice is that *Sundarmon* is a programme that does not incur a high expenditure. Here, teachers as mentors guide and train the students. As a result, expenditures for training become nil.
7. *Sundarmon* goes a long way in building healthy teacher-student relation and makes the students feel "home in campus."

5. Evidence of Success

The objective was to encourage the students to participate and perform. During the first two years of the programme, events were Intra College. Thus, students who performed to win prizes in the events during the first two years obtained their success from within, without any competition from outside, particularly from students from urban areas and the metros. During the third year, when the events were made open to students of other colleges, the students from Bankim Sardar College continued their chariot of success. They continued to participate, perform and win prizes to reflect their excellence.

1. Out of the 38 prizes declared in the 14 events, students of the college won 14 prizes.

2. Out of the 26 writings selected in *Beautiful Minds*, 3 writings from the college got selected

This reflects the success of the best practice as the college becomes able to bring out the *Sundarmons* in the *Sundarbans* and make them align and included in the mainstream.

Yet another success of this practice is that two other colleges have expressed their willingness to join hands in extending this programme to the city of Kolkata and spread the idea amongst other colleges to give *Sundarmon* a much broader horizon.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The practice do encounter problem in the areas of **time resources**. With the introduction of the CBCS and the semester system time is becoming the limiting factor – for both the teachers and the students - in actualizing the practice