

## 7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness

Sivanath Sastri College was set up as part of a vision to support, empower and ignite the women of India in every possible way. Historically speaking, it is an integral element of the forward looking, progressive Brahmo Movement in Bengal. Today, it is no longer a Brahmo college specifically, but it carries forward everything that was most inspiring in that historic past. That tradition believed in uniting all the wise insights thrown up by our ancient civilization, religion, culture and philosophy together with radical interventions from the West – a union of the Oriental and Occidental in the truest sense. This is the vision the institution tries to carry forward that is reflected in its activities and policies. The college commemorates days and events that are significant for our culture - such as celebrating the lives of Rabindranath Tagore, Pundit Sivanath Sastri, Pundit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. One of the Best Practices of the college, as outlined on the Institutional Website, is the adoption of activities that will lead to self-awareness and creative expression rooted in contexts that are specific to India. There are regular Dance Workshops and Drama Workshops on issues such as corruption, feudal exploitation in rural areas, violence in contemporary urban life, the concerns of the youth addressed through dance forms, myths, symbols, dialogues that are relevant to our culture, both ancient and modern. Even while the institution believes in the current emphasis on vocational courses, on scientific and commercial ventures, on digitalization and online material, it still believes in retaining the core values of an Education System that can be called liberal, radical humanist and philosophical. To this effect, there are regular seminars, webinars, workshops that encourage discussion on any issue from all possible angles without any preconceived agenda.

Sivanath Sastri College is a Morning College situated in Golpark, which is a sophisticated urban area of Calcutta. However, if we turn into the by lanes of the locality, we will find that it is adjacent to the slums of Kankulia Road and Panchanantala. Also, the college is accessible to the suburban areas of Baruipur, Sonarpur and Narendrapur which are connected by local train, and many of our students come from these adjoining areas. The college then caters both to students from economically affluent families as well as to those who are disadvantaged, those who are first time learners, and even some below the poverty line. The college also provides concessions to its needy students and provides full coverage of fees to some students from its Student Aid Fund.

Sivanath Sastri College Library leads the issue of inclusion by adopting various policies. UGC BOOK bank system is one of the important policy by which the Students can borrow books for one year.

The NSS Unit of the college as well as its Extension Committee and Alumni Association reach out regularly to the adjacent slum areas with its special camps. Medical camps and Health awareness drives. Surveys were conducted by our girls on the socio-economic conditions of the slums help to raise their sense of responsibility to their community. These also help them to be good citizens of the society with humane values. Students coming from varied religious backgrounds participate in all cultural programmes with integrity and harmony. Culture of inclusion and harmony is the tradition of the college and it is planning to extend its service to rural areas of South 24 Parganas . A plot of land has been bought by the college to build its second campus which will help in the fulfilment of this objective.