

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. That tradition believed in uniting all the wise insights nurtured 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. 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 scientific and commercial ventures, on digitalization, 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, workshops that encourage discussion on any issue from all possible angles. Further, the institution was one of the first undergraduate colleges to offer commerce education for women and has retained its position as one of the top commerce colleges in the State.

Sivanath Sastri College is situated in the heart of South Kolkata. 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. Proximity to a local railway station makes the college accessible to the suburban areas as well as the rural hinterland of the city. Therefore the college caters to students from socio-economically diverse backgrounds. Financial assistance is provided for students from economically constrained backgrounds

The NSS Unit of the college, the Extension Committee and the Alumni Association reach out regularly to the adjacent slum areas with medical camps and health awareness drives. Surveys are conducted by our students on the socio-economic conditions of the slums to assess their problems. These also help our girls to develop into 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 suburban areas of Kolkata. A plot of land has been purchased by the college to build its second campus which will help in the fulfillment of this objective.