

Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sevagram

INITIATIVES TAKEN TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY

Our institute has taken various initiatives for the promotion of gender equity. These are as follows:

1. The institute makes all efforts to promote a gender-sensitive environment by ensuring gender equality and absence of discrimination on grounds of gender, promoting equal opportunities for women faculty and students to participate in all activities in patient care, teaching and research
2. Engendering faculty and staff attitudes and behaviours: Women have occupied all top administrative positions including Director, Dean, Secretary, Medical Superintendent and Students' Council General Secretary at MGIMS. Various programmes are conducted to sensitize students and faculty about need to prevent discrimination based on gender.
3. Gender mainstreaming workshops have been organized in the past. The concepts of gender equity are incorporated in the curriculum of students by the following methods:
 - Sessions in the Orientation camp: Sensitization to gender
 - Sessions in the Social Service Camp: Workshops on "how to say no"; concept of gender in health
 - Sessions in the ROME Camp: case discussions on gender as a social determinant of health
4. Our institute provides specific facilities to women for their safety and counselling. For this we have **Womens' Internal Complaints Committee** headed by Dr Vijayshri Deotale. The Student guidance and counseling centre deals with psychosocial issues. The Institute has a **Grievance Redressal cell** and a **Students' Grievance Redressal Committee** to redress the students' problems with Dean, MGIMS as the chairperson. The nature of grievances addressed include hostel issues, inter-student conflicts, teacher-student conflicts, attendance and disciplinary issues. The committee not only receives and analyzes grievances from the students but also strives to identify the realities of the grievances and finds solutions for the same. It takes crucial steps for remediation/resolution and brings it to the knowledge of the management. It is ensured that all kinds of grievances are rectified confidentially.

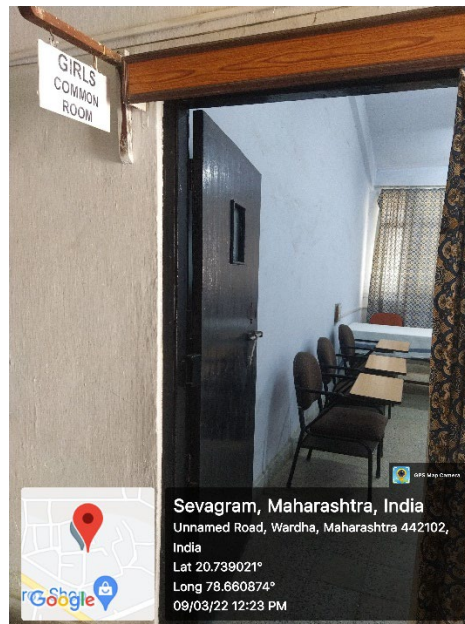


5. Our institute gives the opportunity of flag hoisting on Independence and Republic day to the students who came in merit that year without gender bias. The institution ensures the participation of female students in intra- and inter-institutional sports competitions and cultural activities by conducting separate inter-batch tournaments for female students' cultural activities both at institute and University levels. Many female students have represented the University at the State and all India level competitions and won awards for the same.



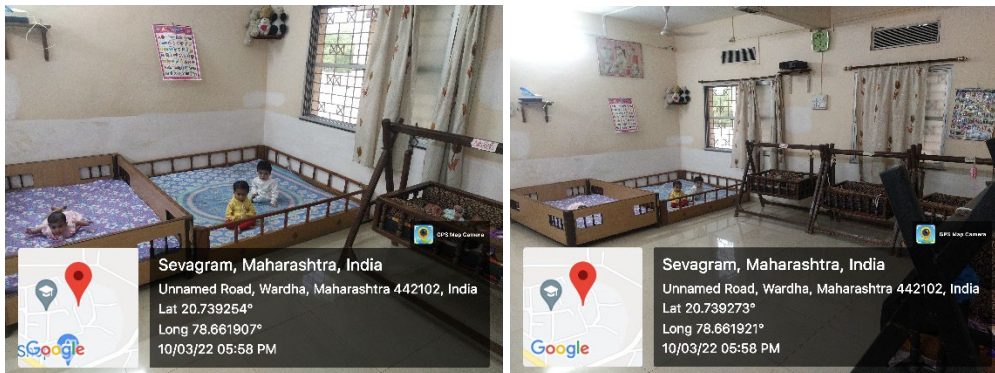
6. The institute conducts the major women empowerment programmes in the community (e.g. Womens' self help groups and Kishori Panchayats or adolescent girls' groups) and these are learning grounds for students.
7. Our institute provides specific facilities to women for their safety and counselling. A Committee has been constituted to look into complaints related to Sexual Harrassment under the Cell for Prevention of Sexual Harrassment in the workplace.

8. MGIMS has an Anti-Ragging committee. MGIMS calls for a zero-tolerance policy towards ragging. It follows measures mentioned in the Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging Act (1999), recommendations of Raghavan committee (2006) constituted by the Supreme Court, and guidelines issued by the Medical Council of India (2009) to root out the menace of ragging in medical institutions. The management, the dean and the teachers personally interact with the students and take them in confidence by apprising them of their right as well as obligation to fight against ragging. A **Vigilance Committee**, composed of medical teachers, keeps a keen vigil in the ragging prone zones to prevent its occurrence and recurrence.
9. Our institute provides counselling to the students as well as patients at various counselling centers available at department of community medicine, General OPD and Psychiatry ward.
10. Our institute also provides common room to students. Our institute is concerned with need of personal space especially for girls who are young adult as this is co-education institute. This is very essential for them to interact, discuss with their counterparts and also rest whenever needed. The girl's common room is situated on the 2nd floor and provides spacious room accompanied with chairs, tables, almirahs, refrigerator to the students. Our institute also provided common room to both girls and boys situated at 3rd floor which provide place to relax, discuss, study in available free time.



11. This institute is attached with residential quarters and hostels thus also giving facilities to workers to take care for young children. The day care center soon made available to all.

12. Our institute has initiative like **Aakanksha Shishu Kalyan Kendra** coordinated by Dr Chhabra for safe motherhood and safe baby for one and all, even for an unwed girl with unwanted advanced pregnancy. Aakanksha, a not-for-profit, residential adoption institution on campus, was born in 2002. The Obstetricians in the institute noted that unwed mothers often abandoned their babies after they were delivered. These babies were sadly neglected, barely looked after and would wait eternally to be adopted. The faculty in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology department, moved by the plight of such babies, decided to start a center where such babies could be sheltered, cared for and given to a loving and caring family. The center also wanted to make the entire adoption procedure more child friendly so that such children are able to find placement in loving and caring families. The child stays in the center until such time that a suitable family is identified for adoption and the mandated social and legal process is completed. Aakanksha is conscious of the fact that a successful adoption needs open communication, acceptance, and a supportive environment in which couples can discuss adopting a child as a viable alternative means of achieving parenthood. Adoption involves a lifelong commitment. To safeguard the interests of the child as well as the families concerned, the center follows definite procedures. These are regulated and monitored by the State authorities (Woman and Child Welfare Department, Wardha, Government of Maharashtra) and the judiciary. “Adoption was one of the most rewarding experiences of our life. Without a doubt, it changed our family forever. Being entrusted with raising a child was a dream and but for Aakanksha we could not have fulfilled our dream,” said a teary-eyed mother who recently adopted a baby. During April 2020 to March 2021, thirteen babies were adopted and have become the joy in the life of needy couples, two of them were by parents from out of country. The Honorable President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind acknowledged the work of this centre on occasion of Golden Jubilee celebrations of MGIMS, Sevagram. (<https://www.mgims.ac.in/index.php/aaakanksha>)



13. Our institution has taken initiative in view of women empowerment by providing them entrepreneurship at campus. The Udyami Mahila Mandal is a woman run canteen serving and catering the culinary needs of most of undergraduates, interns, post graduates, faculty and staff as well as serving to the patients. This group also sell handmade clothes/dresses, paper envelopes and other materials thus also encouraging make in India program by these means.