

Annual Gender Sensitization Action Plan

We, at ZHDC, are fully aware of our responsibility as an educational institute in the society. We take it to be a matter of accountability and opportunity to be a proactive participant in influencing the direction of positive social transformation. We recognise Gender as a spectrum rather than a mere binary. We recognise that the marginalization of women from the socioeconomic and political sphere and the reluctance to acknowledge individuals beyond the socially constructed binaries, are widespread and deep-rooted in our society. For us, therefore, one of our most significant aims is to promote gender equity and to create an environment where individuals can unreservedly question, explore and embrace their gender identity. The intent is to employ our resources optimally to fulfil the stated goals by invigorating regular dialogue around such issues within the society with an aim to mobilize students into action at the grass-root level.

One of the modes to actualize our goals, we realize, is by *strengthening institutional mechanisms* and structures to ensure that every member of the ZHDC community practices and promotes gender equity and works towards mitigating gender disparity. Secondly, we focus on *the holistic development of our students to transform them into effective drivers of progressive social change in the society*. Finally, as a part of our social responsibility, *through our social outreach programs, we directly attempt to work with the people at the grass-root level* in the desirable direction.

For us, the task in the stated directions begins with devising ways and means to improve women's *access to education*. To actualize the foregoing, we already pay special emphasis in favour of female students wherever possible. Thus, *a relaxation of one per cent is offered to female students by many departments in their cut-off marks required to make them eligible for admissions in their desired courses*. We will remain committed to this practice in the foreseeable future.

Further, to safeguard and promote the interests of women, we have a *gender sensitizing committee*. This committee is entrusted with creating more awareness amongst students' concerning the existing discriminations and disparities and to act responsibly and collectively for putting an end to such regressive practices. The committee works throughout the year to organise varied programmes at various forums to promote gender equality overall. The committee, in line with its assigned goals, will organize theme-based Nukad-nataks, Poster making, sketching and other art competitions promoting gender equality in collaboration with *Suchitra*—our fine arts society. Likewise, the intent is also to organize poem, essay and debate competitions, to address gender issues and encourage gender equality. Films sensitive to the issue will be screened by the society and plays will be organized in collaboration with *Aman*—our theatre society.

We also have a *Girls association* and *Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)* in place. The girl's association of the college throughout the year organises number of activities for girl's students to explore and encourage their hidden talents and abilities. ICC is the nodal body designated to address the grievances and concerns of the students and staff related to the sexual or any other forms of physical and mental harassment.

These associations are committed towards their goals and will organize events and activities through various modes to sensitize and acquaint students with significant issues pertaining to the empowerment of women leading to their development and growth. The girl's association would also be refreshing the organisation of *Self Defence Training Camps* for girl students in collaboration with the Delhi Police, to strengthen their movements in the physical and mental spaces and greater participation in the society and nation building.

Like our students and our society, our understanding of gender issues has been consistently evolving, and we, much like the most progressive sections of our society and elsewhere, have come to understand that addressing gender discrimination issues requires a holistic and focused approach to gender equity that can culminate in collective effort and social mobilization at the grass-root level to bring the desirable change. Thus, we intend to form a *Women Development Cell*, one more platform dedicated to the purpose. It will be tasked with addressing the concerns and grievances of the female students and devising ways and means to safeguard their interests in the campus. The cell will also be assigned the task to investigate and identify the ways and means to further strengthen our efforts to promote gender equity and to effectively implement the same. Further, we recognise that gender understood as a binary constructed by the social narrative is an underappreciation and neglect of the spectrum that individuals often belong to. Thus, the cell will also be tasked with facilitating the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ community and addressing their concerns.

We recognize that our students hold the potential to be the vanguards of positive social transformation. Thus, to provide them with a holistic education, the cell will be tasked to bring awareness regarding the issues surrounding gender equity and to invigorate a dialogue within the student community. The foregoing will be actualized by organizing Webinars/seminars, special lectures, panel discussions, conferences/paper presentations and workshops time and again. Finally, we recognize that our social responsibilities extend beyond our walls. To proactively and positively influence the social transformation, we intend to form a closer partnership with people, local governments and civil society organizations at the grass-root level. The cell will be responsible for organizing the outreach program to directly participate in the social transformation at the grass-root level, where we, in partnership with people, can work to promote gender equity.