

Institutional Distinctiveness

Rabindra Mahavidyalaya, Champadanga

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Come 2020 and the institutional life, may the entire human life all over the world goes for a toss. An unprecedented and never-seen-before topsy-turvydom defines the global crisis that hit us in the form of a pandemic called Covid-19. We lost as if the key to survival as death and disease reigned supreme. But amidst the horror it is existential instinct that kept life going in a plodding, staggered manner. We begin to get used to the realities of lockdown and social distancing at a dear price. However, like others, technology came to our aid and the ubiquitous internet provided the silver lining to the dark cloud of gloom. A portal RMV online (<http://www.rmvonline.in>) was officially inaugurated on 2nd April 2020- just a few days after official lockdown was clamped upon us. Intended as a bridge for academic and official communication, it soon gained into popularity among all the stakeholders as physical transactions had to be substituted for by the virtual mode. Online class and examination, attendance and feedback system, serving notice and sharing TLMs, User Orientation Programme and the online library services including e-requisition, e-document delivery and providing online books and journals were carried along this mode of delivery. Gradually the ambit was extended further to include cultural programmes like Rabindra Jayanti (Birth Anniversary of Tagore), Teachers' Day celebration, International Yoga Day, Quiz Competition, online exhibition etc.

As an inclusive channel of communication, the portal was made to accommodate some lecture series, national and international webinars, workshop on digitization and archivisation of text and music. As a collateral development, a YouTube channel RMV online was initiated and in no time started boasting of a formidable following and viewership. To sum it up, the portal became a singular and effective window for carrying on most educational and cultural activities during this period of unforeseen crisis and thus constitutes the singular and most important channel of communication.

Besides all these the administration of the college tried its best to keep the system alive and afloat. Regular financial activities like salary disbursement, re-fixation of salary of staff after pay-revision, payments to vendors and payments of salary to casual and security staff were carried on without any break as payment and keeping of records are made mostly digitally. Cleaning of classrooms and the campus was also carried out though in a sporadic manner. The Nature's Club of the college took timely measure so that the gardens did not turn into a messy wasteland with weeds and other unwanted growth. Taking into consideration the overall health of all sections of staffers, the Institute continued paying out the salary without any reduction or irregularity to all the Guest Lecturers and Casual Non-Teaching Staff. The women self-help group called Prerana Sangha entrusted with the task of running the college canteen was also helped out monetarily by both the administration and the Teachers' Council as regular monthly payment was ensured to the four lady workers. Mobile calls, emails and the WhatsApp as a media platform proved to be handy in maintaining communication with the affiliating university or the Department of Higher Education. No physical meeting of the College Governing Body would be arrange barring one meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee through


instructions were received from time to time through telephonic conversation and social media chats.

On the academic front, teachers used different platforms like Zoom or Google Classroom and Google Meet for webinars or classroom instructions. Students feedback was captured and stored. Some departments generated e-content that included class note audio notes or video graphed visuals for facilitating the learning of the student. Bulk SMS was used for individual communication especially in programs like Government sponsored vaccination. RMV online was used for uploading of e content to enable future referencing while the college website was used for all important notification.

In this time of crisis, as a measure of greater social responsibility, the Teachers' Council of the college made two consecutive contributions of rupees 5000/- and rupees 50000/- to the Prime Minister Relief Fund and the State Government Relief Fund respectively. The TC also took timely initiative to distribute food packets among the food and needy of the local community.

Another distinctive activity took place when, despite all the heavy odds and following the directive of the UGC, the UGC sub-committee of the college carried out a local Survey as a way of comparing the widespread outbreak of Spanish Flu in India in 1920 and the pandemic of Covid- 19 in 2020. A comprehensive report aided by our NTS and based on sample survey, was generated and send to the UGC Office, Delhi on time.

Like the rest of the world, the college itself had to take recourse to the virtual as an ultimate and sometimes desperate way of surviving the buffets of fate. The principal from time to time kept on addressing the students and staff for motivation and mental support when nothing seemed to be going our way. To sum it up the triumph despite losses, could be ensured through the effective implementation of technology and while following a general trend, the institute could still make its unique mark in almost everything it did at a time of great crisis.



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