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DEI comes into focus again

The horrendous rape and murder of a 31-year-old trainee doctor at the RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata has once again put the spotlight on the unsafe environment for women in today's India. Her father's account of how he had to wait at the hospital for three hours before his daughter's body, wrapped in only a bedsheet, was handed over to him, is gut wrenching. The autopsy found clear evidence of sexual assault and strangulation. For the misogynists who always point the accusing finger at the woman when a rape occurs... why was she out so late in the night, why was she dressed like that and such gibberish, the question needs to be asked: If a trainee doctor who had gone to the seminar hall to rest during her 36-hour-long shift is not safe in a state-run hospital, then what hope of safety is there for the more vulnerable girls/women in India? A positive fallout of this gruesome crime is women of Kolkata coming out in huge numbers to reclaim their space and ask some very tough questions to the state headed by a woman chief minister. The investigation is on, but the spontaneous eruption of anguish and outrage in Kolkata is a pointer that young women are fighting back.

While hoping for the harshest punishment to the perpetrator of this crime, and a fair investigation into the allegations of sexual harassment of women in the Malayalam film industry, the triumph and heartbreak of another woman, who came out on the streets to demand justice and punishment to a powerful man for sexually harassing her and other women wrestlers, come into focus. Instead of justice, Vinesh Phogat, and other protesting wrestlers, got thrashing, in full public view, from police personnel for their

courageous battle against sexual harassment. Yet she continued, and finally made it to the Paris Olympics, swelling our hearts with collective joy and pride by winning the semifinals. As a billion-plus Indians dreamt of her bagging our only gold medal in Paris, came the heartbreaking news of her disqualification from the Olympics itself, for failing the weigh-in test by a measly 100gm in the 50kg category. The very logical question of why she couldn't get at least a silver medal for winning the semifinal fair and square was answered by the Court of Arbitration for Sports which dismissed her appeal. According to the rules, "a wrestler must not only be eligible at the beginning of a competition but must also remain eligible for the whole of the competition, that is, from entry to the finals."

Whatever the verdict, medal or no medal, in our eyes, particularly Indian women who know how the systems in our country are loaded against the "second sex", Vinesh has emerged a champion. She took on an entire establishment fought against powerful people, did not get justice and yet persisted with her dream to reach the peak of excellence at the Paris Olympics. This is no mean achievement. She will continue to be a hero for all Indian women, particularly those, who suffer sexual innuendos, harassment, and molestation in their work environment. Vinesh needs to be cheered by Rotarians who really believe in the DEI mantra.

Rasheeda Bhagat

Pahel, A Seminar on Mental Health

Pahel, a workshop cum seminar on Mental Health

Mental Health is a universal human right. According to WHO, mental health is "more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities". It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.

Rotary Club of Ballygunge organized this Mental Health camp with 25 students and their parents from the marginalized section at Rotary Sadan.

I am honored to be a part of this initiative as Principal of Birla Bharati, the workshop being the first of a series to follow...to promote mental health awareness and provide support to community at large. PDG Mukul Sinha was the Chief Guest. The other panelists were Diksha Shah, Director Nipha group and Wellness Coach and Rtn Dr. Amlan Bhattacharya, President, Rotary Club of Ballygunge.

Thank you Rtn. AshifShah for this wonderful opportunity. A special thanks to Payel Chatterjee, School Counsellor of Birla Bharati, for assisting me in this noble venture.

~From the Column of "Ms. Apala Datta" (Educationist):

Pahel Mental Health Camp: Parenting Styles & Stress Busters





A humble beginning is always better than inaction. Initiative and intuition are vital in discerning the precise needs of a community. With changing socio-economic conditions and increased access to information, there is an urgent need to make mental health a household conversation. This was the driving force behind the Pahal - Mental Health Camp: "Parenting Styles & Stress Busters" held on 14th September 2024 by the Rotary Club of Ballygunge and Rotary International District 3291.

The workshop was designed as a deeply immersive experience to address the rising challenges of mental health and stress management for both students and parents. Students from Shri Gandhi Vidyalaya High School, accompanied by their parents, attended the session, which aimed to foster a better understanding of emotional well-being and offer practical tools to cope with stress.

In today's high-pressure world, both parents and children struggle with emotional strain, academic challenges, and the growing complexities of modern life. The session addressed key areas such as thinking styles, personality identification, social perception, emotional imbalance, and the challenges experienced at both school and home. Furthermore, the workshop explored the crucial distinctions between love and blame within the parent-child relationship.

The objective of the camp was to equip participants with essential coping mechanisms, encourage healthier communication, and promote mental well-being through mindful practices. The event provided a space for inquiry, learning, reflection, and connection, offering a sanctuary for families to openly discuss their challenges.

Event Highlights

1. The event commenced with registration at 10:00 AM, followed by separate sessions for parents and children.
 - a) Parents' Session: Led by Dr. Amlan Bhattacharya and Ms. Diksha Shah, the session explored how children's thinking styles impact their emotional and psychological development. This interactive session allowed parents to reflect on their own parenting approaches, comparing them with their children's styles, which often lead to conflicts. These discussions encouraged solution-oriented dialogues and offered parents practical strategies to address these conflicts.
 - b) Children's Session: Facilitated by Ms. Apala Datta and Ms. Payel Chatterjee, the children participated in creative exercises designed to link emotions with animal characteristics, promoting self-awareness and emotional literacy.
2. Panel Discussion and Open Forum: All the panellists were introduced, after which they shared their insights on mental health, particularly within the parent-child dynamic, from their respective fields of expertise. This segment encouraged a meaningful dialogue between parents, students, and the expert panel, providing a valuable exchange of ideas.
3. Vote of Thanks: The event concluded on a positive note with a vote of thanks delivered by Mr. Ashif Shah and Ms. Rinku Das Choudhury. Participants enjoyed a delightful meal, engaging in lively conversations, and capturing joyful moments in photographs. The warmth and energy in the room were clear indicators of the event's success.

A special thanks to our esteemed panellists—PDG Mukul Sinha (industrialist), Dr. Amlan Bhattacharya (medical practitioner), Ms. Diksha Shah (mental health coach), Ms. Apala Datta (educationist), and Ms. Payel Chatterjee (educationist)—for their invaluable contributions. Their expertise, combined with the enthusiastic participation of the attendees, made the event truly impactful.

As the day drew to a close, it became evident that there is a growing need for such discussions within the community. The Rotary Club of Ballygunge is committed to organizing more workshops like this in the future, creating opportunities where families can come together to foster mental health and emotional well-being.

Mental health is a cornerstone of our well-being, and it is time we prioritize it in every household and community. This workshop marks the beginning of a long journey towards breaking the stigma and ensuring mental wellness for all.

We look forward to many more opportunities to engage, educate, and empower.



Summary

Panelists & Facilitator
Diksha Shah
Director - NIPHA Group
Life Coach & Mental Health Practitioner
Rtn. Apala Datta
Principal - Birla Bharati

Member of Education Committee BCC & I
AG 24-25, District Interact Advisor 24-25
Past President, RC Avyanna
Dr. Amlan Bhattacharya
Medical Practitioner - General Medicine
President Rotary Club of Ballygunge 24-25

Mukul Sinha
Past District Governor, RID 3291
DLCC 2021-25
Rotary Sadan
14th September 2024
10:30 am onwards

Editor's Column

Abraham Lincoln once said, "The best thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time." I am fond of saying you "eat the elephant one bite at a time," but old phrasing is much more eloquent.

If each day we can take a small bite of all those tasks we have been putting off that will make Rotary better and more relevant, then it will be a day well lived in our "Service above Self" lifestyles.

Do a small thing every day. Call a member who has been ill. Invite a person to visit your club. Share your enthusiasm.

Article on Literacy Mission



LITERACY MISSION



The Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM), formerly known as Rotary South Asia Society for Development and Cooperation (RSAS) aims to work towards Total literacy and Quality Education in India. To achieve that RILM have designed a comprehensive program called "T-E-A-C-H" where:

- T - Teacher Support
- E - E-learning
- A - Adult Literacy
- C - Child Development
- H - Happy School

Each of these programs has a specific focus and it is interlinked with each other in achieving the common goal of bringing total literacy and improving the learning outcomes of primary education, in various parts of the country.

The most two significant part of this mission is as follows:

The Teacher Support Program

The aim of the Teacher Support program is to improve the professional skills and performance of teachers through training/re-training and recognition to outstanding teachers.

Training/Re-training instils confidence and strengthens skills in teachers which eventually lead to better performance in everyday classroom; it also reinforces teachers' content knowledge and improves the learning outcome of the students. Recognising teachers for their outstanding contribution in shaping young minds boosts confidence in teachers.

Achievements: RILM have successfully trained 1,80,707 teachers with the proactive role of Rotary clubs around the country. Apart from training, 45,458 outstanding teachers have been recognised with the Nation Builder Awards.

RILM's E-learning program

"E-Shiksha", aims at improving the teaching-learning experience through the use of curriculum based audio-visual modules in local languages in Govt. / Govt. aided schools.

"E-Shiksha" is the program is a single classroom installation in Government / aided schools which aims to improve the teaching-learning experience through an integrated solution consisting of a LCD projector / LED TV / Smart LED TV loaded with the educational audio-visual software mapped with State curriculum in local languages. Software content can be offline entrenched in a SD card / pen drive or online rooted to any educational application depending upon the requirement of the project.

Achievements: As of now, RILM have successfully installed e-learning system in 27,368 government and government-aided schools across the country through Rotary Clubs, CSR and PSU support.

Through NCERT partnership, RILM has successfully taken its digital content to 15 million households through DD Free Dish, 420 million users through Jio Mobile, 70.26 million households through TATA Sky and also initiated million learning sessions through DIKSHA portal.

Minutes of the 2506th RWM held in the Cosy Room of International Club, Kolkata, on 12/09/2024.

- President called the 2506th RWM to order.
- The President requested all to rise for the National Anthem which was sung in chorus.
- The President announced one project has been planned on 14th September to be held in Rotary Sadan at 10:30 am. It is a panel discussion & workshop with interactive sessions covering basic problems of mental health and the beneficiaries will be the students and their parents/guardians. The panel will comprise of doctors, psychotherapist/psychologists. President requested all members to attend the programme. It will be held in 3 parts : Workshop & Activities ; Panel Discussion ; Interactive Session with Students & Parents/Guardians.
- President announced on 21st September another project has been finalised with Interact Club of Shri Gandhi Vidyalaya, for eye check up camp in their school premises. Followed by the installation of the Interact Club.
- President announced on 28th September another project at Sarat Memorial School in Park Circus has been finalised for Health & Eye check up camp in their school premises.
- President declared one more project is in the preliminary stage covering the Literacy Project arena of Rotary Services; where we will distribute some computers/systems/desktop peripherals to schools.
- President announced Rotary Club of Calcutta has proposed to give 4 sewing machines to RCB as part of their project.
- President requested PP Ashif Shah to speak about the Mobile Check up Van Project of Rotary Club of Calcutta. PP Ashif Shah shared details with the members. RCB can be partner in the project by contributing 500 USD.
- President announced a cloth distribution project will be held as done every year during the Durga Puja festival. Members are requested to come forward with proposals and beneficiaries. A hat collection was proposed for the project.
- The President requested members to come forward with suggestions/thoughts/feedback, if any.
- President handed over to the Secretary for Club Business.
- The Secretary welcomed and thanked the members of RCB for joining the RWM and announced the Club Business.
- Secretary Handed Over to the President for further proceedings.
- President terminated the meeting.

Members Present : 08