

IIT-Kgp chalks out girl success story

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Kolkata: IIT Kharagpur has taken up a dual initiative to boost girls' education on and off campus. While the percentage of girl students has jumped to 15.35% this academic session from just 7.94% last year — the result of a move taken by the institute and the HRD ministry — the premier technology institute on Thursday announced a pilot project to boost the academic performance of girl students under the state government's Kanyashree project.

Mid-school and high school students covered by Kanyashree could be given technological support to help them achieve excellence, said IIT-Kgp director Partha Pratim Chakrabarti. "Girls studying in classes VI to XII could be connected to the National Digital Library, which will provide them access to a vast repertoire of educational resources. Other low-cost technological aids like e-resources, which are being used by the state administration, could also be used. We are already holding talks with the district administration to work out a plan," said Chakrabarti. The pilot project will be launched in West Midnapore.

He added that given the right opportunity, Bengal girls have the ability to do even better and outshine the rest. "All they need is the right opportunity. Learning is no longer just text book-based, but has got diversified. We need to explore various media through which better education can be disseminated. This will also help the girls to have better access to educational resources and perform better," Chakrabarti said.

IIT Kharagpur will also start educational clubs in schools to reach out to girl students. "We shall also explore learning through mobile technology. The stress will be on improving cognitive learning. We will keep in touch with teachers, students and parents through mobile. It will lead to better interaction among the stakeholders," said Chakrabarti.

The number of girl students in IIT Kharagpur jumped to 223 this session from 106 last year. Following a decision by the HRD ministry, the number of super-numerary seats for girls was fixed at 111 this year. But 117 girls made it to IIT-Kgp in 2018, which, say the authorities, is a sign that girls have improved their performance.

"It's not just the increased number of seats that allowed more girls to qualify. While it did boost the morale of girl applicants, the IIT Council, too, played a proactive role. Women teachers and girl students of IIT formed a team that interacted with applicants, calling them individually and encouraging them to join. This paid rich dividends which is evident in the sharp rise in girl students," said an IIT source. Chakrabarti described the rise in the number of girl students as phenomenal. "This has happened due to the efforts made by the IIT council and the human resource ministry," he said.

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