

2020

MONTHLY REPORT OF MAY

**Department of
Social Work:
NSS & UBA**

Awareness Campaign on COVID-19

On 2nd May, Rahul Mondal of B.COM from the Raghbapur campus was able to conduct an awareness session about COVID-19 and the precautions to be undertaken to stay healthy. In spite of being in the midst of lockdown, he was able to implement this awareness campaign from his doorstep for the children in his immediate neighbourhood. The children as well as their parents were happy as they were able to learn about this contagion that has brought the whole world to a sudden halt. Rahul was extremely delighted when he saw one of the children who attended the session was trying to guide his mother on how to wash her hands properly with soap. Even a smallest effort in this crisis situation does give results.

Photo Gallery



Figure 1: NSS Volunteer conducting awareness on importance of hand washing



Figure 2: A small step in spreading awareness



Figure 3: a poster depicting the precautions that can be taken against COVID-19

Strengthening the NSS Core Team - Online Leadership Training and Skill Development

Every year the Department conducts an Orientation on Leadership skills for the newly formed NSS Board Members in the beginning of March. This year it was scheduled for mid March but unfortunately due to the lockdown, it could not be held. Nonetheless, that did not hinder the Department from planning the same workshop virtually for its core team of about 15 students from both the campuses. This training was conceptualised, designed and facilitated by Prof. Cheryl Francis and assisted by Ms. Sucheta Mukherjee and Ms. Shrawani Jha. The three week long training commenced on 11th May 2020. However, nine days into the training, Cyclone Amphan struck and caused trauma to the students and left most of the Raghampur students' houses damaged and without electricity for days. Hence, it was decided to postpone the training till our students are in a better position to participate and learn from this training.

It is important to note that in the nine days of the training, the students got an insightful input session on who is a leader, what are the inherent characteristics of a leader and how to be an effective communicator. The students also got an opportunity to plan a week long imaginary camp, for which they were divided into various committees (such as finance, logistics, programme development, fundraising and so on). The students acquired the skill of formulating programme schedule during this time.

The preparatory phase of the training programme commenced on 1st May 2020, wherein the idea of this workshop was floated among the students. Once the students expressed their willingness, they were given a task of planning a visit to COVID-19 affected location. They were given a choice of cities both in India as well as abroad. The students unanimously decided to visit Ahmedabad. Thereafter, they were divided into various committees who together brainstormed on the various aspects of the visit, ranging from booking railway tickets, applying for student concession, to raising funds for the visit, undertaking an in-depth research about the city and coming up with concrete activity plans which they would implement.

During the implementation stage of the training, which commenced on 11th May 2020, 2 webex meetings and 4 conference calls were scheduled with the students. An input session on ***Making of a leader*** was conducted by Prof. Cheryl Francis. During this session, the students brainstormed together on *who is a leader* and *whether leaders were born or made*. After the session, the students understood that a leader also emerges, wherein a given situation forces leadership out of individuals. This they could relate to their own present lockdown situation where almost all of them had to take up leadership at home.

All the committees got an opportunity to present their assignments and shared the challenges they faced and how they overcame it. Based on this session, the next input session on ***How to be a good communicator*** was planned by Ms. Sucheta Mukherjee. The session elaborated on the key steps of being an effective communicator. The third important input session for the students was on ***Recognizing the leader within*** conducted by Prof. Cheryl Francis. This session helped the students to identify their leadership potentials. On the other hand the students in their respective committees worked on budget, logistics and programme schedule of the virtual visit to a COVID-19 affected place, which was debated and mistakes corrected.

On 19th May 2020, all the Raghampur campus Board members wanted an input session on ***How to prepare a programme schedule*** which was conducted by Prof. Cheryl Francis. After the session the students were given individual assignments of formulating a programme

schedule, which they did successfully. During a feedback session, the students shared how they were able to put their learning from this training to practice in their respective families. Mimi from Commerce (Evening) said, *“The two things I learnt from this training, is to take responsibility and to be the initiator and not wait for others to respond”*. While on the other hand Chandrima, a third year student from Raghampur said, *“This training has been quite helpful for me so far as I have learnt how to communicate effectively, which I think will help me for years to come.”* We hope to resume the training from mid of June, once our students are in a position to participate meaningfully.

Relief Operation for Cyclone Amphan : Gift a roof initiative

Cyclone Amphan, the strongest recorded storm in the Bay of Bengal, ravaged mercilessly the southern district of West Bengal on 20th May 2020. The cyclone made landfall at 165km/hr in the late afternoon of 20th May on the southern tip of Bengal. As the cyclone darted inland, it wrecked havoc to whatever lay in its path that included all the villages situated around St. Xavier’s College Raghampur campus. Most of the houses were badly damaged and needed urgent relief. The cyclone left the affected areas without electricity or network coverage.

A large number of students studying in the rural campus live in the nearby villages. Already they were undergoing serious financial crisis due to lockdown and family members losing their livelihood. Cyclone Amphan deteriorated their situation further.

In collaboration with the College Alumni Association, the College decided to reach out to its students who were most affected by the cyclone with relief aid. On 23rd May, the NSS sprung into action and one volunteer went around on a cycle looking for his college mates. He was able to reach to very few places due to inaccessibility. Meanwhile one Professor, along with another student went looking for other students for a few days consecutively and managed to locate a few more. Meanwhile at the rural campus, Rev. Fr. Johnson Padiyara, S.J., the Vice Principal brought together the Heads of various departments who prepared a list of affected students, along with photographs of the damaged houses, with the help of their respective Class Representatives. A few conference calls and meetings brought in more clarity and ensured smooth coordination of the whole effort. In association with the NSS department, a list of about 47 students and 2 support staff, who needed immediate relief, was prepared for phase I. These students reported to the rural campus in small numbers and submitted all relevant documents to avail of the relief provided by the Alumni Association. An amount of Rs. 5000/- would be transferred to their bank accounts. A second list is being prepared under phase II, of another 50 students who would receive relief benefits in the month of June 2020.

It was encouraging to see the professors of the Raghampur campus who worked hard to connect with their students in spite of challenging situations. The Class Representatives too supported this whole initiative with total commitment. A total number of 9 Professors and about 10 students from the Raghampur campus were involved in this noble initiative coordinated by the Department of Social Work, NSS & UBA.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

In the exiting pandemic situation, field work activities under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan came to a sudden halt. Therefore, the department utilized the time for planning and documentation work.

During this time the annual reports from December 2018 up to April 2020 was finalized and uploaded on the UBA portal.

On 4th May 2020 Prof. Cheryl Francis, Ms. Sucheta Mukherjee & Ms. Shrawani Jha participated in a virtual meeting conducted by the UBA for the Participating Institutions under the Regional Coordinating Institute, IIT Kharagpur. In the said meeting representatives from NCI, RCI, and PIs came together to share and discuss about the initiatives undertaken by them for prevention and mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the adopted villages. As a takeaway from the meeting PIs were encouraged to continue relief operations as well as to plan and prepare Village Development Plan and Project Proposal on the same.

The report on the initiatives of the relief operation undertaken for COVID-19 along with Media appraisals for the same has also been prepared and uploaded. A project Proposal on the making hand sanitizer was prepared in collaboration with the Dept. of Microbiology. The project is aimed at producing hand sanitizer and distributing the same to the adopted village community members.

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