

# Department of Social Work: NSS & UBA

*Report for  
the month  
of  
March 2021*

## ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

- i. **Departmental meetings:** The department staff had 4 virtual meetings and around 8 meetings in the campuses during this month to plan forthcoming rural initiatives in the adopted villages. Secondly, the meetings also focussed on forthcoming activities for our rural campus students (especially current third years) to help them complete their social credit hours.
- ii. **Blessing of the newly furnished NSS office in Raghampur campus:** On 17<sup>th</sup> March, our Principal Rev. Fr. Dominic Savio, S.J. Principal along with Fr. Johnson Padiyara, S.J. blessed the newly furnished rural activity office in the rural campus. We are grateful to the funds received from RUSA which helped to upgrade the infrastructural facilities for rural activities. This was followed by our department meeting where the staff updated Fr. Principal about the progress of outreach activities in the villages as well as online activities for the students. Some of the challenges faced with regard to social credits etc were also shared with the Principal. Appreciation along with constructive suggestions by Fr. Principal encouraged the staff to stay motivated and focussed in the future as well. The staff also expressed the need for involvement of more faculty members in the UBA project and also revamp the UBA Cell of the College. Fr. Principal agreed to the same and asked the staff to organise a meeting of the UBA Cell at the earliest.
- iii. **Submission of social credits of students:** On 30<sup>th</sup> March, the department submitted the first list of students (semester-VI) who completed their social credits to their respective Vice-Principals' offices. Around 1,526 students from across various departments have completed their social credits. As and when more credit sheets are verified, the name list(s) will be sent to the offices.

## COORDINATION AND NETWORKING MEETINGS

The department staff initiated a number of coordination and networking meetings with village contact persons.

- i. **Coordination and networking for in-depth training on organic kitchen gardening:** Around 3 coordination and networking meetings were held with the village contact persons of Shalpur. The staff met and discussed at length about drawing up the attendee list for the in-depth training programme which was scheduled on 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021. To ensure maximum participation and smooth implementation of the training around 10 tele-conversations with the contact persons were held. Around 4 tele-conversations were also held with the resource team from Development Resource Communication and Service Centre (DRCSC) who were the trainers for the organic kitchen gardening training.

## ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

- i. **Manual work at Raghampur campus for main campus students:** From 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021, around 74 students of semester VI, participated in manual work (watering plants, cutting grass and other related work) in the campus to complete their social credits. Through this activity, the students realised that the dignity in all forms of labour and also understood the need and importance of safeguarding the environment.
- ii. **Poster competition on 'Say No to Discrimination' for rural campus students:** On 26<sup>th</sup> March, 12 semester VI students participated in a poster competition on 'Say No to Discrimination'. The students were made to understand that Art is a strong and powerful medium of creating awareness about various social issues. At the beginning of the session, the students were sensitised about various forms of discrimination and their role in saying 'NO' to the same. During the session, the students shared the various layers of

discrimination that they faced in their daily lives, starting from their homes and how they mitigated the same. The students were further encouraged to disseminate their learning among their family members and peers.

## UNNAT BHARAT ABHIYAN – PROGRESS REPORT

### i. Training on Organic Kitchen Gardening in Village Shalpokur:

#### A Gift to Women on the occasion of Women's Day

From amongst the 75 women who were oriented last month on kitchen gardening, 25 women volunteered to undergo in-depth training on the same, this month. The department collaborated with Development Research Communication and Service Centre (DRCSC) to impart training on 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021. On day 1 of the training, the women were made to understand the difference between homestead garden and homestead **Nutrition garden**. The women were encouraged to improve their (both of themselves as well as their families) nutrition quotient through kitchen gardening. It was also explained to them how imbalanced nutrition led to malnutrition and its direct relation to poverty.

The three days training covered important aspects of kitchen gardening, ranging from identifying various types of soil, how to prepare organic compost with easily available natural resources, to designing and planning the soil bed. The women also got an overview on how to select seeds and how to preserve the same for the future. On all three days, besides the in-depth theoretical knowledge, the women also got an opportunity to learn by doing. This helped them to gain ownership of the training and they were determined to make the most of the training.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March, after the training, the department organised a time of fun for the women to celebrate International Women's Day. At the beginning, Ms. Cheryl Francis addressed the women and helped them understand the importance of standing up for oneself and bringing in positive change in their lives. She further said that **this training on organic kitchen gardening was a gift from St. Xavier's College to the women of Shalpokur on the occasion of International Women's Day**. Especially in the current pandemic situation, the college wanted to gift healthy life to the women through this training. Ms. Francis encouraged the women to grow nutrition homestead garden and improve their health and eventually sell their organic produce and organic compost in the market and get financial stability. After this short interaction with the women, the staff along with some student volunteers played some games with the women. The women enjoyed themselves as they were able to forget their routine chores and had fun with their friends. As they headed home, they were handed over a food packet which was a pleasant surprise for them.

As the training came to a close on 9<sup>th</sup> March, the women were eager to try their hands in growing nutrition gardens in their respective homes. One of the SHG member, Ms. Dipika Singh, rightly said, *"This training has been quite unique for me as I have learnt all about organic kitchen gardening. The practical sessions were very helpful. After a few days, I might forget the theories I learnt but the hands-on practical training I got will forever remain etched in my memory."* Another participant, Ms. Paruli Naskar very candidly shared, *"I enrolled for this training, to be away from household chores, as I thought I knew all about growing fruits and vegetables. A couple of hours into the training, I realised how much I did not know, and how ignorantly I grew my vegetables. I am thankful to St. Xavier's College for giving all of us this opportunity to learn about organic kitchen gardening and composting."* (Quotes have been translated from Bengali).

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, the staff was back in Shalpokur village for a follow-up meeting. Some of the participants already initiated organic kitchen garden in their backyards, while others

were waiting for the organic compost (which they initiated during the training) to be ready to start their nutrition gardens. Out of the 6 Self Help Groups that attended the training, one group planned to initiate nutrition garden as a group initiative. The members even identified a plot where they want to grow vegetables. Closer to the sowing season, a follow-up visit will be undertaken by the trainers themselves.

- ii. **Upload of UBA sheets:** This month 108 survey sheets were uploaded on the UBA portal. This completed the upload of Magurkhali village, which resulted in auto-generation of the analysis report of Magurkhali village. There was some technical problem in the UBA online portal for which the auto generated report was not legible. This was informed to the concerned UBA personnel in IIT Delhi, who assured it will be resolved soon. As this technical issue gets resolved, the Village Development Plan for Magurkhali village will be made and the plan of action will be formulated.
- iii. **Webinar cum technology demonstration session for rural entrepreneurship:** On 19<sup>th</sup> March a webinar cum technology demonstration session was organised by UBA, CSIR and VIBHA to promote rural entrepreneurship in various livelihood sector. Demonstrations were presented on (i) Improved jaggery making ó Gur Bhatti; (ii) Process for making biodegradable plates, cups and cutleries from agricultural residues/waste Process for making biodegradable plates, cups and cutleries from agricultural residues/waste; (iii) Sericulture and (iv) Vitamin D2-enriched Shiitake mushroom production and processing. All the PIs were encouraged to implement the technology of their choice in their adopted villages for the benefit of the villagers.
- iv. **Virtual meeting with RCI:** On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021, a meeting was scheduled by IIT Kharagpur with all PIs of West Bengal to discuss which technologies from among the four demonstrated during the webinar on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the PIs were interested to implement in their adopted villages. The UBA coordinator of St. Xavier's College shared that the college will be interested to implement the technology of '**Making biodegradable cutleries out of agricultural waste**' in its adopted villages along with '**Mushroom Cultivation**' as well. However, she also pointed out that only knowledge sharing will not result in alternative livelihood option for the women, unless they got support in packaging and initially marketing their products as well. She urged RCI and NCI to look into this aspect and make necessary arrangements as well as make funds available to implement this project.

## PHOTO GALLERY



The resource person explaining how to design the bed



Practical demonstration on how to prepare organic pesticides





**Ms. Dipika Singh who demonstrated active participation**



**Ms. Dipika Singh being appreciated for leadership**



**The resource person summing up the practical session**



**Trainees preparing the bed after the input session by the trainers**



**Women's Day Address**



**Follow-up meeting on 22nd March 2021 in Shalpokur village**



**Students of Raghobpur campus with their posters on 'Say No to Discrimination'**



**Students from main campus engaged in manual work at the rural campus in Raghobpur**