

Department of Social Work: NSS & UBA

*Report for
the month
of March
2022*

I. Formation of NSS Board:

In the first week of March NSS Unit I began the process of forming the new NSS Board for 2022-2023. Through online registrations from 28th February, which was kept open for a week, students across departments could apply to be part of the new Board. More than 70 students applied of which about 30 students were shortlisted, and group interviews began on 29th March wherein, 13 students appeared for the group interview. About 15 students have been further shortlisted and in April they would be attending the group interviews.

II. NSS celebrates International Women's Day for the rural women at the rural campus

International Women's Day was celebrated on 13th March 2022, for the women of six villages in South 24 Parganas, adopted by St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata, at the Raghampur campus. More than 150 women, who belong to the various SHGs under NRLM, joined the celebration, the theme being "Ei Akashe Aamar Mukti"

The Chief Guest for the programme was Mrs. Leena Gangopadhyay, Chairperson of the West Bengal Commission for Women. The Principal of the College, Rev. Dr. Dominic Savio, SJ, in his keynote address, mentioned the efforts and initiatives undertaken by the College NSS to uphold the dignity of women, especially in the rural community. He reiterated the fact that St. Xavier's College was committed to bring about overall development of the villages and that the Raghampur campus was an example of that commitment. He said, ***"More than 70% of students studying were females and that this rural campus was established with the objective of providing opportunities for higher education to the rural students especially girls."*** He assured the women present that there were several development projects which the college will begin soon, and which will help the village around this campus and in South 24 Parganas. ***"Our aim is to upskill our women so that they can earn and support their family as well as have an identity of their own"***, expressed the Principal.

Mrs. Leena Gangopadhyay, the Chief Guest, in her address, compared the Commission to an umbrella under which women from all walks of life were welcomed and nurtured. She said, ***"Each and every woman should be aware of their rights, and entitlements so that they can contribute towards building a strong and empowered society."*** She cited examples of how the Commission helped women in distress and she expressed her desire to work closely with the college to conduct awareness sessions for the women of the rural areas.

Ms. Jayati Nath from Nurshikdarchowk village expressed – ***"Leena ma'am er kotha shune khub bhalo laglo, shotti toh amra shobai khub khomota prapto khali nijer upor bharosa rakhi na"*** (I was happy listening to Leena ma'am. Really, we all are empowered but it just that we don't believe in ourselves). Similarly, Mallika Panja from Raghampur village said, ***"...Father Principal je bollen ekhan theke amader onek kichu shekhano hobe, taari apkekhai thaakbo amra."*** (Father Principal said that there will be trainings conducted for us, we will wait for it). The women were happy to know about the research and gender studies cell which Fr. Principal announced would begin at the rural campus.

Rev. Fr. Johnson Padiyara, SJ, the Vice Principal of Raghampur campus concluded the programme by thanking the Chief Guest, Fr. Principal, faculty members present and all the women for joining the celebration. He appreciated the efforts of NSS and the team and thanked everyone who was involved to organise this programme. Ms. Cheryl Francis, the NSS Director

thanked Fr. Johnson for providing all the logistical support. She further thanked Prof. Sujata Pakrashi Lahiri, Director of Performing Arts and a member of the Commission for her association with NSS in organising the programme. As a follow up of today's programme, the NSS plans to conduct capacity building exercises and awareness sessions in each of these villages.

A total of 154 beneficiaries from six villages, 14 volunteers from Raghampur campus, 16 XADAM performers, 6 faculty members, 5 support staff from Raghampur campus and 4 from main campus were part of this event.

To ensure the successful organisation of the Women's Day programme several coordination meetings were conducted with for over a month beginning with permission from Fr. Principal and ensuring his presence, invitation to the Chief Guest, volunteer mobilization, women mobilization, cultural programme, Food arrangements and other logistics related to the venue.



Felicitations of the chief guest



Address by the dignitaries



Participants from six neighbouring villages along with the dignitaries



Cultural performance by the women



Cultural performance by XADAM students

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan – Progress Report

I. Follow-up of organic kitchen gardening on 31st March:

A meeting was conducted at Shalpukur village on 31st March 2022, with the women who had attended the in-depth training on organic kitchen garden in March 2021. The 15 women present, were encouraged to practice whatever they had learnt in their training. They shared that the compost which they had prepared last year, were utilized and they were happy with the produce. However, they could not continue with the winter crops due to the following reasons: (a) Back-to-back rains, cyclones resulting in flooding (b) lack of commitment from other team members (c) Lack of availability of raw materials to prepare the compost. Nevertheless, the women have agreed to begin making the compost within a week.



Group picture after the meeting
