

Department of Social Work: NSS & UBA

*Report for
the month
of May &
June*

2023

National Service Scheme – Unit I (Main campus)

i. St. Xavier's College reaching out to support vocational training for underprivileged girls and women

For nearly a decade, NSS volunteers have been visiting Calcutta Muslim Orphanage for Girls and Boys to not just interact with the residents there but to create awareness and impart life skills. This association was further cemented last year, when NSS volunteers started planning and implementing various programmes with the CMO for girls – ranging from celebrating NSS day, to holding science awareness workshops to inviting the residents to participate in Shishu Mela. The overwhelming response from CMO motivated our NSS volunteers to plan more activities with CMO for girls. The CMO authorities appealed to our Principal, Rev. Dr. Dominic Savio, SJ for four sewing machines to initiate vocational training for the girls at CMO as well as for other marginalised girls and women. Without much ado, Fr. Principal graciously mobilised the four sewing machines through the Alumni Association.

On 10th May 2023, 4 sewing machines were donated by Lions Kankurgachi Welfare Society to St. Xavier's College Calcutta Alumni Association (SXCCAA). The machines were accepted by Fr. Principal. On 15th May 2023, these sewing machines were handed over to Calcutta Muslim Orphanage for Girls so that they can initiate vocational training centre for the marginalized girls and women. Mr. Ansari, the Honorary Secretary of CMO, expressed his gratitude to the College for not only the sewing machines but also for the commitment of the NSS volunteers.



Fr. Principal accepting the sewing machines from representatives of Lions Kankurgachi Welfare Society



Fr. Principal handing over the sewing machines to Calcutta Muslim Orphanage Girls representatives

ii. Observing World Environment Day

St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata organized an awareness programme on the occasion of World environment Day on 5th June 2023. The programme was organized by the department of Environment, Chemistry and Microbiology in collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS). The day began with a poster competition, the theme being '**Mission Life – Lifestyle for Environment**' in which 37 volunteers participated. Through the posters, the volunteers depicted how they plan to take baby steps to bring about changes in their lifestyle which will benefit the environment.

This was followed by a brief inauguration in which Fr. Principal addressed the staff and students present about the significance of observing Environment Day. Huladec, an organization that promotes management of e-waste and plastic was introduced. The company placed a bottle crushing machine in the college canteen and two big smart dustbins for collection of plastic bottles.

An exhibition of the posters made was held in which three students were chosen as winners. The students then attended a lecture on "*Understanding the connections between Global Environmental Change and Human Health*", by Dr. Kashinath Bhattacharya, Professor, Visva Bharati University.

St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata
Department of Social Work

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME UNIT - I
OBSERVES
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2023
DATE: 5TH JUNE 2023
VENUE: College Campus
TIME: 10.00 A.M. ONWARDS

POSTER COMPETITION
MISSION LIFE

 **LIFE**
Lifestyle for Environment

 Save Trees: Save LIFE

  **SAVE**



**NSS volunteers participating in the Poster competition –
'Lifestyle for Environment'**



Volunteers with their posters



Judges at work



Exhibits ready



Fr. Principal and other dignitaries during the exhibition



Prize distribution

iii. Prayas.....the community outreach continues at St. Xavier's

Project Prayas (College to Village and Village to College) is fully alive at St. Xavier's College. After a gap of three years, the Prayas camp, organised by the NSS & social work department of the college began on 19th June 2023 with the theme, ***“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high...”*** The camp was declared open by College Principal, Rev. Dr. Dominic Savio, SJ., along with the Vice Principals and other faculty members. About 35 students (classes 9 to 12) from the Calcutta Muslim Orphanage for Girls (CMO), an organisation with whom the college students have a strong bonding, participated in this three-day camp which concluded on the 21st of June.

In the inaugural address, Fr. Principal welcomed all the participants and motivated them to continue their higher education. He said, ***“I welcome you all to this College today and I hope that you will study hard and continue your education in this College. The door will always be open for you.”***

The inauguration was followed by two important relevant awareness sessions on child & human trafficking and domestic violence which was conducted by Ms. Susmita Guha, senior Manager from Save the Children and Ms. Sujata Parkrashi Lahiri, College Head of cultural activities and a member of the West Bengal Women's Commission, respectively. This apart, around 25 volunteers of various departments had put together sessions on career counselling, mental wellness, various government schemes and scholarships etc. available for students. These sessions were an eye opener for the participants, as one of them rightly said, ***“We learnt how important it is to come together so as to protect ourselves as well as others from such crimes.”***

Through these sessions, Prayas created awareness on the challenges faced by girls and women in general and to give the message that education is a strong weapon to combat these challenges. On the last day of the camp, the students got an opportunity to visit the observatory and learn about the recent developments in astronomy. The students and volunteers were overwhelmed with the opportunity to watch the sky up close for the first time in their lives. Nafisa Meher, a X science student from CMO shared, ***“I feel so lucky to have got this opportunity to visit the observatory. Ever since the didis from Xavier's came to CMO and conducted the science awareness workshop, I dreamt to come to this College and see the observatory. Prayas camp fulfilled my dream. Thank you so much.”***

During the closing ceremony, the students and volunteers shared about their camp experiences. Tajmira Khatoon, a class XI student of CMO said, ***“Through this camp, I became aware about the subtle way in which domestic violence takes place and how I can raise my voice against any form of violence. I am glad I made friends with so many didis during the camp. God willing I hope to study in this College after my class XII.”*** Ashia Khatoon shared, ***“Pata hi nahi tha ki army mein larkiya ja sakti hai but didi log ne bataya ki hum kuch bhi kar sakte hai agar mehnat kare toh”*** ((I didn't even know that women could enrol for the army but the volunteers told us that we could do anything if we work hard for it). On the other hand, Srijani Roychowdhury, a semester 4, Biotechnology student shared, ***“On the third day when we went to the Fr LaFont Observatory, I was so excited as it was my first-time there although I have been studying here for the past 2 years. I would also like to say that the “Prayas” of this camp in educating young girls both from the CMO and the college was quite successful and I can say with confidence that I am leaving the camp as a matured Xaverian”.***

The interaction between the college students and the CMO girls is a win-win situation for both. The children got motivated by the college students who became their role models and the college students too, got to understand the struggles of these children which helped them add value to their own lives.

Fr. Principal concluded the camp on a very positive and encouraging note and he expressed, *“After three days, the camp has not ended but this is the real beginning of a new relationship of your journey with St. Xavier’s College. Study well and we at this college are always there to help you in your endeavours. Let this visit not be your last, the doors of this College is always open for you all”*.

A journey that began 17 years back, has touched several lives. Children from the villages who attended these camps in the past have completed their college education. Such has been the impact of Prayas, that a rural campus at Raghobpur was set up for the benefit of the rural students. The Raghobpur campus today stands testimony to one of the core Jesuit values of *‘concern for the poor and marginalised’*. Prayas will continue its commitment to bridge the gap between the rural and urban youth.





Fr. Principal inaugurating the Prayas camp on 19th June 2023



**Interactive session on child trafficking
Resource team - Save the Children**



Dr. Farat Bano, Dean of Arts, motivating the students

Ma'am Sujata creating awareness on domestic violence



Interactive sessions on career counselling and government schemes conducted by volunteers




