

St. XAVIER'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), KOLKATA

UBA START-UP 2018-2019

-A REPORT-

Compiled by Department of Social Work & NSS, St. Xavier's College
(Autonomous), Kolkata

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30, MOTHER TERESA SARANI, KOLKATA – 700 016

Introduction

St. Xavier's College selected as Participating Institute under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan – The College was selected as a Participating Institution (PI) under UBA in October 2018 and will be working in the following villages in South 24 Parganas, (i) Bakeswar, (ii) Debipur, (iii) Magurkhali, (iv) Raghampur and (v) Shalpurkur. UBA is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The mission of UBA is to enable participating higher educational institutions to work with people of rural India in identifying development challenges and evolving appropriate solutions which will contribute towards sustainable growth of the partner communities. The College, through knowledge transfer as well as community mobilization will bring sustainable rural development in these five villages. A UBA Cell consisting of faculty and students have been formed in the College. All students are encouraged to participate in this endeavour.

Preparatory phase – coordination and ground work

UBA Cell was formed in the College and the first meeting was held on 13th December 2018. A UBA Field Coordinator based at Raghampur campus was appointed in December who visited the villages selected under UBA and prepared the ground work. A meeting with the District Magistrate and the UBA Coordinator was held in December. Subsequently, letters were sent from the College to the Higher Education Department, informing them about UBA-SXC partnership. Prof. Cheryl Francis (NSS Director & UBA Coordinator) along with Ms. Sucheta Mukherjee (NSS Coordinator) attended a one day 'Regional workshop for orientation of participating institutes to initiate work in adopted village clusters' at IIT Patna on 21st December 2018.

A meeting with the local MLA, VP of Raghampur campus, UBA Coordinator, Panchayat Pradhan and other local stakeholders was held in January 2019. Another meeting along with all the Panchayat representatives of the selected villages was conducted for smooth implementation of the programme. A pilot survey was conducted in Shalpurkur village.

Orientation of students and faculty

In July 2019 the faculty were given an orientation and an update about UBA and a similar orientation was organised in August for the students and faculty of four major departments – Economics, Biotechnology, Mass Communication and Microbiology.

Household Surveys



Figure 1.1: Students after completing the day's survey



Figure 1.2: Villagers eagerly participate in the survey



Figure 1.3: Students getting a glimpse of the hardships the villagers' undergo



Figure 1.4: Students engrossed in survey



Figure 1.5: Household survey underway



Figure 1.6: Students and staff after completing the survey of a village

From February to October 2019, a total of 380 (155 male + 225 female) students completed 1,952 household surveys in the five adopted villages.

The survey has been completed in Debipur village, and the data has been uploaded in the UBA online portal. An analysis of the survey has been auto-generated. The plan of action has been formulated which will be implemented in 2020.

Awareness Campaign in the Adopted Villages



Figure 2.1: Students and children rally around the village collecting single use plastic



Figure 2.2: Village children too participate in the awareness campaign



Figure 2.3: Students explaining the ill-effects of plastic on the ecosystem



Figure 2.4: Students and village children after the awareness campaign

In the months of September and October 2019, an awareness campaign on the **ill effects of plastics on the ecosystem** was organized in the villages. The students prepared posters on plastic pollution, organized street plays and rally with slogans such as ‘*Plastic hatao, prithibibachao*’ (Remove plastics and save the Earth) and ‘*Plastic borjonkoro, notunprithibigoro*’ (Ban plastics and create a new world). As an outcome of the campaign, ‘*SabujBahini*’ (Green Brigade) was established in Debipur and Shalpokur villages. The ‘*SabujBahini*’ consists of about ten enthusiastic children, who will be responsible to carry forward the work initiated by UBA volunteers.

Gram Sansad & Sabha Meeting

St. Xavier’s College (Autonomous), Kolkata as a Participating Institute of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) attended the Gram Sansad and Gram Sabha meetings in its five adopted villages, namely Bakeswar, Debipur, Magurkhali, Raghampur and Shalpokur of Bishnupur I block, South 24 Parganas in November 2019.

Gram Sansad and Sabha meeting schedule:

Sl. No	Particulars	Meeting Date	Village	Sansad No
1.	Gram Sansad meeting	7 th and 17 th November	Bakeswar	6, 7, 8 and 9
2.	Gram Sansad meeting	13 th November	Debipur	9
3.	Gram Sansad meeting	13 th November	Raghampur	12 and 13
4.	Gram Sansad meeting	15 th November	Shalpokur	17 and 18
5.	Gram Sansad meeting	20 th November	Magurkhali	3 and 4
6.	Gram Sabha Meetings	28 th November	Panakua Gram Panchayat & Kulerdari Gram Panchayat	



Figure 3.1: Father Johnson vice-principal of the college's rural campus addressing gram sansad meeting in Bakeswar village



Figure 3.2: UBA coordinator Prof. Cheryl Francis addressing gram sansad meeting in Bakeswar village



Figure 3.3: Prof. Cheryl Francis addressing Gram Sansad meeting in Debipur village



Figure 3.4: UBA coordinator (fifth from left) during Gram Sansad meeting in Magurkhali village



Figure 3.5: UBA Coordinator (second from right) with Panchayat official (right) and elected panchayat during Gram sansad meeting in Shalpokur village

Attendees from St. Xavier's College:

1. Johnson Padiyara, S.J , Vice Principal, St. Xavier's College – Raghapur campus & Mr AlopeMakhal, support staff (Invitee) – Attended meetings on 13th and 17th November
2. Cheryl Francis, St. Xavier's College (Invitee) – Attended all meetings
3. Sucheta Mukherjee, St. Xavier's College (Invitee) – Attended meetings on 7th, 13th and 28th November
4. Abdul Hannan, St. Xavier's College – Raghapur campus (Invitee) – Attended all meetings
5. DebuMondal, St. Xavier's College – support staff (Invitee) – Attended meetings on 17th, 20th and 28th November

Below is a report capturing the key issues that were discussed and highlighted during these meetings.

Main points discussed –

1. At the onset of the Sansad, the *Sabhapati* explained to the villagers that during the meeting, they must discuss and raise their concerns so that it gets recorded in the minutes and necessary follow-up actions can be undertaken.
 2. The villagers unanimously stated that they appreciate the work of the panchayat as far as construction of road is concerned, but speedy action needs to be undertaken to construct roads in the remaining areas as well. They pointed out that once roads are constructed, the youth of the village will be able to earn a living by driving 'totos', ambulance can reach to the sick, children can go to school etc.
 3. The issue of drinking water crisis was raised very strongly by the women of the villages. There are areas in the villages, that do not have access and availability of safe drinking water, the panchayat members made a note of it and assured necessary action will be taken.
 4. The villagers mentioned that some of them do not get old age, widow and disability pension and wanted to know how it can be addressed. The panchayat workers advised them to visit the panchayat office and submit relevant documents to avail the scheme.
 5. Xavier's College representative, ma'am Cheryl Francis was invited to address the gathering. In her address she focussed on –
 6. She thanked the villagers on behalf of the College for warmly welcoming and accepting our students in their villages.
 7. She mentioned about the Raghapur campus and how the village students were benefiting from this campus. She also assured that if there were students interested in higher education, the College would support in all possible ways.
- She requested the village community to cooperate with the college students by sending their children for all programmes and activities which they would be conducting in the villages as well as in the college. She further told them to look after the safety and security of the college students when they visit the villages.
 1. She mentioned that the College would like to continue working in their village in collaboration with the local schools, so that the children attending these schools will get exposure to more creative ideas and be further encouraged to continue their education.
 2. She mentioned that the College would be working with the youth, women and children's group more intensively through training, awareness and other related activities that will benefit the village community.
 3. Fr. Johnson Padiyara, Vice-Principal, St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata – Raghapur campus, further reiterated in his speech that college education should not stop due to lack of funds as the College will provide necessary support.

Gram Sabha meetings of Panakua and Kulerdari Gram Panchayats
Date of meetings: 28th November 2019



Figure 3.6: UBA Coordinator Prof. Cheryl Francis of St. Xavier's College addressing Gram Sabha meeting in Panakuapanchayat



Figure 3.7: UBA Coordinator Prof. Cheryl Francis of St. Xavier's College addressing Gram Sabha meeting in Kulerdaripanchayat

Attending the Gram Sabha meetings of both the Panchayats have been very crucial and important for the college, as it would facilitate the rural development initiatives of the college.

Main points discussed –

1. Cheryl Francis thanked the panchayat members of both the panchayats for inviting the college to attend the gram sabha meetings. She further thanked them for their unconditional support to the college over the years and for welcoming the students to their villages. She said in future, the college will organise various study tours wherein the villagers are encouraged to send their children which will help their holistic development.

Overall conclusion

Following are the key learning of the team from St. Xavier's College:

1. In all the meetings, it was noticed that the meetings were primarily attended by women, which reflects their integrity towards village development. Therefore all action plans would be carried out through the women's groups.
2. There is no awareness among villagers about various social security as well as 100 days employment scheme of the government. Mass awareness is required on available Government schemes and the procedures to avail them which could be done by the College students.
3. In all the villages, there is crisis of potable water and lack of proper roads (in some areas).
4. The magnitude of the above stated problems is much more for families who stay in the midst of both the panchayats (Kulerdaari and Panakua).
5. All the villagers have very high regard for St. Xavier's College and have acknowledged the contribution the college has made in providing education to the youth of the area. However, they are looking forward to the intervention of St. Xavier's College in addressing some important issues.

Please Note:

The College completed the survey of Debipur village and the survey data was uploaded in the UBA online portal which resulted in auto-generated analysis report. The College further made a summary of this report and identified key issues. These key issues, was further validated during the Sansad meetings. The College from 2020 will initiate programmes addressing these issues like quality supplementary education, mass awareness campaigns on environment, waste management and composting & alternative employment opportunities.

UBA publicity in the campus



Figure 4.1: UBA poster displayed in the campus for wider dissemination of information

As per recommendation of the National Coordinating Agency the UBA banners has been permanently displayed in the college campus to encourage students and faculty to become active participants.

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