

Department of Social Work St. Xavier's University, Kolkata

Report on Rural Camp 2023

Theme: Dimensions of Rural Life in Border Villages of West Bengal



The rural camp, 2023 was organized by the Department of Social Work, SXUK at Dutta Phulia, Nadia from 11.1.2023 to 20.1.2023. The Department partnered with Sreema Mahila Samiti (SMS), a non-profit organization in Duttapulia, Nadia, to provide an opportunity to the students to gain practical exposure of rural life. Mr. Sukhendu Bank, Dr. Sucheta Paul, Dr. Srenwantee Bhattacharjee, Dr. Jacob Islary accompanied the students to the camp.

The rural camp was formally inaugurated in the afternoon of 11.1.2023 in the presence of Madam Bani Saraswati, founder of the organization and Mr. Jyotirmoy Sarawati, Director of the organization, the staff of SMS, the students and the faculty members. Resource



persons from SMS explained the various on-going projects and programmes of the



organisation. Students learnt about the Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) programme. ASHA training center, ChildLine Services, WASH programme, Shishu Vidya Niketan, Women Self help groups, Saving the Icchamati river etc.

In the first half of 12.1.2023, students visited the BSF Anti Human Trafficking Unit at Ramnagar. They saw the Icchamati river dividing India and Bangladesh, the villages in the border and learnt about the problems of border areas from the officers of 8 BN BSF.



Students walked through Kumari village and had informal discussions with

the villagers. In the second half of the day, students took part in a rally along with the staff and beneficiaries of SMS to celebrate the 161st Birthday of Swami Vivekananda.



Students visited Duttapulia Primary Health Centre (Upgraded) in the first half of 13.1.2023 and interacted with the doctors there. Students also observed a Rubella & Measles vaccination Camp



at Barbariya Colony Primary School. Students visited Aranghata Gramin Hospital in the second half and learnt about the functioning of a rural hospital. In the afternoon students visited Bahirgacchi haat and interacted with the buyers and sellers in the haat. Teachers and students



interacted with the staff of SMS, beneficiaries of SMS and the local people to better comprehend their observations and learnings.



In the first half of 14.1.2023, the staff of SMS conducted a lecture session on the Sishu Vidya Niketan programme of the organization. The students learnt that the organization has been running free primary schools in nine border villages since 2019.15 teachers teach 220 students in the nine primary schools. Later students



visited Duttapulia G.S.F.P school, interacted with the teachers and students of the school and learnt about the ongoing welfare schemes for students. In the second half students visited a brick kiln at Duttapulia. The objective was to gain an understanding about the manufacturing process and the situation of the brick kiln workers.



Students visited the pottery industry at Krishnanagar on 15.1.2023. Students learnt about the traditional craft, the skills required by the artists, the transmission of skill from one generation to the next, the huge demand of the goods produced and the challenges faced by the artists. Later teachers and students visited the famous ISKCON temple at Mayapur. Teachers explained to the students the contribution of the pilgrimage center to the local economy.



On 16.1.2023 the students visited the office of Block Development Office, Ranaghat – I and interacted with the Block Development Officer and other officers of the Block. The Block Development Officer explained to the students the various developmental



programmes like MGNREGA, Indira Awas Yojana, different



pension schemes, Kanyashree Prokolpo, NRLM etc. executed by the office. The students then visited Ramnagar Gram Panchayat Karyalaya and learnt about the functioning of the Panchayati Raj system. In the second half students visited an NGO named



Ushagram. They later went to interact with the hand loom weavers of Phulia.



On 17.1.2023, an organization named Justice Venture International interacted with the students and sensitized the students on the problem of trafficking of human beings.

In the second half students interacted with the members of Shakti Bahini and listened to the way they worked for empowerment of women. The last activity of the day was a session on Bratachari movement.





On 18.1.23, students went to a border tribal village named Silberia and interacted with the villagers. The students later interacted with the staff of the Border Security Forces of Baronberia 8th Battalion. In the second half students took part in a rally organized by SMS for saving the Ichhamati river.



On the morning of 19.1.2023, a session was organized by the staff of SMS to educate the social work students about the Asha Training Programme, the responsibilities of an ASHA worker and the challenges that they face. In the second half the students took part in the Pithe Puli Utsab organised by SMS.

Students participated in the cultural programme and enjoyed the local food of the community.



The rural camp came to an end with a feedback session on 20.1.2023.

