

Report on Community Betterment Intervention Series in Rehabilitated Slums on World Mental Health Day and Save the Girl Child on October 10, 2016 at Bavaji na Chhapra, Khokhra, Ahmedabad

School of Liberal Studies, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University and Safal Constructions Pvt. Ltd.(bSafal Group), initiated the first Intervention in Community Betterment Series at Bavaji Na Chhapra, Khokhra. It is a rehabilitated Slum in Ahmedabad.

The Intervention series is a result of the Pre and Post Rehabilitation Impact assessment Project done by Ms. Neeta Khurana and Dr. Ritu Sharma of School of Liberal Studies, PDPU. The initiative has had the blessings and support of Director of SLS, Prof.(Dr.) Nigam Dave and that of Mr. Rupesh Brahmhat, MD bSafal Group who has been the driving force in taking the study to the intervention stage.

The event saw the participation of 200 residents of the rehabilitated slum, they participated in the Mental Health Awareness programme and the poster making competition on the themes of “Ek Pahel Mansik Swasthya ki Aur” and “Beti hai to Kal hai”. A total of 169 poster entries were put up in the society for all to see in a designated Poster Exhibition. The children and residents of the society were involved in setting up the posters and in the planning of the event. The material for the posters was distributed a week before to all residents, courtesy bSafal, and the Faculty team educated them about the theme of the intervention.

Dr. Nigam Dave, Director, School of Liberal Studies, PDPU congratulated the PDPU team on stepping out of the four walls of the university, and integrating learning with society at large.

Dr Ajay Chauhan, Medical Superintendent, Government Hospital, Ahmedabad, spoke about the availability of help lines and the role of Mental Health Hospitals.

Dr. Rajendra Anand, Superintendent, Kanoria Hospital & Research Centre specifically emphasized on various stages of addiction and health complications arising thereof. He also spoke of societal ills where parents allow their children to eat ‘guthka’ and stop them from going to schools.

Ms. Neeta Khurana, Asst. Prof. Dept. of Languages, Literature and Aesthetics SLS, PDPU said the initiative of interventions is to lead to a “Model Rehabilitated Slum” . She emphasized the need of focussing on Mental health issues of women and need for change in perception towards girl child calling it the need of the hour.

Dr.Ritu Sharma, Asst. Prof.& HOD, Dept. of Psychology, SLS, PDPU emphasised the need to remove stigma attached with mental illness and the increasing suicidal trends and need to implement action plans for healthy and better society.

The focus of the intervention ensured sustainability by empowering the local community to take ownership of their mental and physical health said Simran Bhatia, student coordinator.

Shachi Barot, student coordinator added, the thought of promoting betterment of girl child was reinforced and discussion regarding “Beti hai to Kal hai” was emphasised by the speakers of the programme.

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Student volunteers Meenoni Daga, Nishi Shah, Trishla Surana, Sharon Kutty, Aesha Patel and Himja Trivedi worked tirelessly to make the program a huge success.

Mr. Shailesh Shinde, the leader of the society and Ms. Payal Shinde, a resident of the society gave their feedback and spoke of the benefits of such interventions showing their happiness that many more were to follow. BSafal distributed a token gift to all the participants while SLS team gave certificates to best 20 Poster entries. The event closed on a happy note with the recitation of a poem written by a resident on save the girl child and the song 'Aashaayein'.