

A Report on ‘COVID EXPRESS – I AM BECAUSE WE ARE’

Introduction:

Padmakanya Multiple Campus (PKMC) was established in 17th September, 1951 A.D. as first women's campus of Nepal with its motto: 'Education for Women Empowerment'. It is the constituent campus of Tribhuvan University and has been working with an aim of providing quality education for women empowerment; empowering and enabling women. Presently, it has been offering higher educational degrees in humanities and social sciences, management and science.

Social work is a professional activity concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective wellbeing. It aims to help people develop their skills and ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. Social work began as an academic discipline which started in 1996 A.D. in Nepal. Before considering the academic programme as social work, it was studied under the name 'social service' in Padmakanya Multiple Campus, the one only campus in Nepal with this subject under humanities and social science faculty. In this sense, it is the mother institution and the institution of legacy in the social work education in Nepal. In the academic year 2019/20 only, there was admission of total 1,135 students for enrollment in BASW program of PKMC.

COVID-19 is a global pandemic and during this unprecedented time, people have been affected physically, psychologically as well as socially which may result loneliness, stress, lack of self-expression among each other leading as a result a lot of psycho-social problem has been seen. Thus, it is essential to build a strong sense of connection and solidarity among the students during this time. Keeping that in mind and also with an aim of marking "World Social Work Day, 2021" the Department of Social Work, Padmakanya Multiple Campus had initiated a program called 'COVID-EXPRESS: I am Because We Are' and it was supported by Social Workers' Association Nepal (SWAN). This program was designed with the theme of World Social Work Day- 2021: "Ubuntu: I am Because We are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness" for all the students of PKMC. Therefore, COVID EXPRESS was the platform targeted towards the students of PKMC for promoting self-expression and social connectedness through different forms of expressive creation that included student's original art,

craft, stories, write-up, poem and expression of lived experience of students in any form. Those creative creations of students were exhibited in the campus premise. It also included expression of different activities of the department and the activities of the students during and/or after the lockdown period like volunteering, participating in different programmes (like Women March, celebration of World Social Work Day in Tribhuvan University, food support program), travelling and so on. Some of the hand-made jewelry and knitted clothes from the students were also kept for selling which were made by students during the COVID- lockdown. The exhibition also included rented indigenous cultural dresses which were kept for hiring and hand band for 'World Social Work Day 2021' which was kept for selling with the aim of informing the importance of indigenous culture, knowledge and skills. Donation was also collected for charity and additionally some amount collected from selling of the hand band was also kept for the donation. With an aim of exhibiting all these expressive creations and a theme: "Let's share, express and empower", "COVID EXPRESS EXHIBITION" was successfully conducted on March 19, 2021 at the campus.

"COVID EXPRESS EXHIBITION" was a part of the project "COVID EXPRESS: I AM BECAUSE WE ARE" which was organized by the Department of Social Work, Padmakanya Multiple Campus in the support of Social Workers' Association Nepal (SWAN), where Campus Chief of PKMC Prof. Dhan Prasad Pandit, Ass. Campus Chief of PKMC Mr. Raju Malla, President of SWAN Mr. Krishna Sundar Khaitu, Mr. Pratik Sharma Lamichhane from Tribhuvan University, Head of Department of Social Work Ms. Sukrita Rai, Ex-Head of the Department of Social Work Ms. Meena Parajuli, Lecturers of Social Work Ms. Saraswati Pokhrel, Ms. Sangita Dahal, Mr. Badri Raj Bhatta, Mr. Trichandra Paudel and Head of Department of Political Science Dr. Govinda Guragain were present. The programme began with formal session and the informal session included the exhibition of the expressive creations.

Objectives:

- To celebrate the World Social Work Day, 2021 standing united with social workers in Nepal.
- To provide a platform to the students for expressing and sharing their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and empowering them.

Activities:

Faculties of the Department of Social Work, the trainees and volunteers were involved in the preparation for the exhibition. The formal session of the programme was started with the inauguration of the program by the chief guest; the campus chief of PKMC, Prof. Dhan Prasad Pandit. The president of the SWAN also shared his views regarding importance of social workers during the pandemic and the need of professional identity in Nepal. The former department head and the current department head wished students and stressed the importance of social workers and need of such program for empowering social work students. After the formal session, the exhibition was started.

More than 200 visitors had visited during the exhibition. They had observed the creation of the exhibition and some of the visitors also bought the materials which were kept for selling and donated for the social cause. Also, some of the visitors had hired and worn the indigenous cultural dresses exhibiting importance of indigenous knowledge and culture.

Annex



The chief guest; Campus Chief of PKMC addressing the programme



The special guest; President of SWAN addressing the programme



Observing the hand-made jewellery



Sharing love and happiness



Happy students of PKMC in campus' dress



Students observing the exhibition



Some glimpse of the decoration of exhibition



Students in indigenous cultural dress



One of the guest observing the creation



Students clicking pictures with props